

London School of Economics and Political Science

Department of Sociology

**Naples in the Time of the Spider: Talk and Transcultural  
Meaning-Making in Neapolitan Markets**

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## Abstract

This thesis explores the articulation of cultural meanings about belonging, entitlement and positionality that are emerging across transcultural boundaries in Neapolitan street markets. I conducted nine months of ethnographic fieldwork from licensed and unlicensed market stalls around Piazza Garibaldi central train station, working with Neapolitan and migrant street vendors. Street markets are an important part of the informal economy in Naples. High levels of unemployment and strict EU immigration rules have made market vending into a vital survival strategy for both Italian citizens and newcomers. Markets are thus a key site of encounter across racialised boundaries. My analysis of notes, photos and audio recordings gathered in the field reveals a compendium of multilingual language practices that are used by people in street markets as part of an everyday, pragmatic cohabitation with difference.

My work contributes to the existing body of knowledge about ‘race’ and racism, in particular adding to the growing number of studies about postcoloniality in Italy and Southern Europe. In stressing the importance of language in intersubjective interactions I not only tell a story about the particular context and history of race relations in Naples – where different sorts of speaking are central to a fraught history of political, economic and cultural subordination – but also offer a key to understanding what is at stake generally in the complex and ambiguous multilingual reality that has resulted from intensified migration across the world.

In addition, the thesis considers the models of collective organisation and resistance that come about amongst people subjected to informal, unstable and differential legal statuses and labour conditions. My research participants are struggling to find ways to live with and survive the fact of their own disposability within the global economy. I argue that this leads to both tactics of racialised closure, exclusion and division; as well as to the exploration of ambivalent transcultural solidarities, collaboration and struggle.

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# Contents

Chapter One: Introduction.....	10
What's Going On in Naples? .....	10
The Research .....	11
Culture, Language and Difference .....	13
Chapter Summaries .....	16
Chapter Two: Conceptualising the Multilingual in Naples.....	20
Language .....	20
A Short History of Language in Naples .....	21
Urban Sociolinguistics and Anthropological Work on Language .....	23
Theorising Transcultural Language Practices in Naples.....	28
Dialogical Speech Genres and Ideological Creativity .....	28
Language Tactics and Languages of Resistance.....	31
Humorous Language and the Grotesque .....	33
Glissant's Multilingual Counterpoetic .....	35
Difference.....	37
Naples and the Nation: Unification, Colonialism and Migration .....	38
Naples as a Port City .....	45
The People: New Neapolitans and Old .....	47
Theorising Difference in Naples .....	50
Belonging .....	50
Hegemonic Masculinities.....	51
The Urban.....	53
Neapolitan Street Markets.....	54

The Impact of Power Structures on Street Vending.....	56
Theorising Street Markets .....	58
Solidarity in Street Markets .....	58
Conflict in Street Markets .....	62
Chapter Three: Managing the Multilingual in the Field .....	65
Methods in Practice.....	66
Participant Observation.....	66
Translating the Field .....	69
Photographic Methods .....	72
Negotiating Access.....	75
The Street Markets and the Market Personalities .....	85
Via Bologna Street Market.....	88
Unlicensed Pitches .....	94
Poggioreale Market .....	100
Chapter Four: Market Cries and the Neapolitan Art of Getting By .....	105
How Street Vending is Defined .....	111
Defending Street Vending as an ‘Arte di Arrangiarsi’.....	111
Mobilising Notions of Illegality and Criminality Against Street Vending .....	120
The Impact of Other Street Hustles on Markets.....	125
The ‘Pacchisti’ .....	126
The Roma.....	129
Market Cries Across Transcultural Boundaries .....	134
Greetings and Humour .....	135
Bartering in Neapolitan .....	140
Bartering in English .....	144

<i>Sapé Fà or Know How.....</i>	155
Concluding Thoughts .....	158
Chapter Five: Banter and Catcalling on Neapolitan Pavements .....	161
Banter .....	168
Banter about Sex .....	169
Banter about Women.....	174
Banter about Football.....	177
Verbal Aggression and Playfighting .....	182
Catcalling .....	185
Catcalling Passers-by .....	186
Catcalling Female Street Vendors.....	190
Catcalling Female Ethnographers .....	194
Catcalling Interracial Couples.....	198
Concluding Thoughts .....	202
Chapter Six: Talking About Talk to Talk About Difference .....	204
Cultural Mediation .....	207
Playful Pedagogy .....	216
‘ <i>A Varc’è Matalena</i> or Magdalen’s Boat .....	225
/spik t:nglɪʃ/ or Speak English! .....	234
Concluding Thoughts .....	242
Chapter Seven: Not Talking At All.....	243
Insults That Deny Reply.....	247
Not Understanding the Other .....	255
Refusing to Believe the Other Understands You .....	263
Concluding Thoughts .....	268

Chapter Eight: Contentious Language and Living with Disposability in Naples .....	270
Suicide as a Symbol of Disposability.....	274
Disposing of Unlicensed Street Vendors .....	278
Black Street Vendors as Folk Devils .....	278
The Symbolic Exorcism of the Threat .....	282
A Note on the Camorra and the Policing of Street Vendors .....	286
Strategic and Collaborative Responses .....	288
The Battle for Via Bologna.....	290
Discourses about Death, Dying and Decay.....	292
Rights Discourses.....	300
Facing Power Together .....	308
Concluding Thoughts .....	324
Conclusion: Rebuilding the Tower .....	327
Appendices .....	338
Appendix One: Context of field sites within Naples .....	338
Appendix Two: Glossary of Research Participants .....	339
Via Bologna .....	339
Irregular Pitches .....	340
Poggioreale.....	341
The Train Journey in Chapter Six .....	341
Gatekeepers and Members of the Antiracist Scene.....	342
Appendix Three: Glossary of Translation Terms.....	343
Appendix Four: Table of Figures .....	344
Bibliography.....	347

## Chapter One: Introduction

### What's Going On in Naples?

On the 21st March 2012 a Nigerian Refugee was stabbed in the leg at the Kristall Hotel in Piazza Garibaldi, Naples. The hotel, like most of the hotels in the area at the time, was acting as a hostel for him, and others who had survived the ‘new middle passage’<sup>1</sup> across the Mediterranean, until a decision was made about their asylum applications. The solution of using hotels to cope with the larger numbers of people arriving in Italy following the outbreak of civil war in Libya was widely recognised to be inadequate and a sign of the unpreparedness of the region of Campania, in which Naples is the capital, to handle the incumbent ‘refugee crisis’. Fortunately the wound wasn’t fatal and the victim was sent to recover in hospital. Following the arrest of the perpetrator, who worked on the hotel reception, it emerged that the Neapolitan man had stabbed the victim because he was talking too loudly on the phone (Melucci 2012).

Social conflicts around questions of race and racism have been increasing systematically and exponentially in Italy over the last two decades. The widespread hostility expressed against migrants and minority groups is fuelled by the inflammatory rhetoric and policies of successive governments and of the media (Fekete 2008). However, racially motivated events are often explained away as competition over work and housing, or a ‘natural’ xenophobia towards newcomers (Curcio and Mellino 2010; Signorelli 2006, p.206). In particular Naples is regularly described as a welcoming city,

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<sup>1</sup> I am using this term, in the way that Iain Chambers does (2008, p.9), to draw a link between the radical unfreedoms that characterised the movement of people through the Triangular Slave Trade and the experiences of contemporary migrants who attempt the difficult and dangerous journey by boat from Libya to the island of Lampedusa, off the coast of Sicily.

despite and because of the economic deprivation it endures, where events such as the above can only be explained as resulting from local people's misery combined with their *ignorance* about the Other. I would like to argue that the stabbing I have recounted is a dramatic example of the routine and difficult processes through which people contest and negotiate an internally-complex and painful *knowledge* of difference in everyday life in Naples. This knowledge is formed of the traces that colonialism and the Triangular Slave Trade have inscribed upon the cultural landscape of a city that is both part of Europe and sitting on its racialised, subordinated edge. The kinds of struggle over power and institutional neglect that accompanied these processes have resulted in an urban reality that is beset with worklessness and clientilistic political and economic relationships. This knowledge of difference also reflects an understanding of Naples being situated next to a zone of emergency, where desperate people arriving on small boats are received by people without the capacity, training, facilities and, sometimes as a result, will to welcome them appropriately. The sense of this impending tragedy – which blended together the desperation of both the Neapolitan workless and of those arriving on Neapolitan shores – permeated the research context I was working in. I was engaged in fieldwork for this project near the hotel on the day the stabbing took place. As the news spread through the neighbourhood, people were obliged to position themselves, and those around them, within the very texture of the event's narrative. Alternative and competing meanings of responsibility, belonging and togetherness emerged in the various articulations and deliberations.

## The Research

My research concerns the processes of racialisation occurring in place-making struggles, such as the above, in Neapolitan markets. It responds to an urgent need for the

development of a critical theory of race in Italy given the fact that a discussion of how race and racism are articulated in particular contexts and environments is almost absent from both scholarly debate and the public sphere (Curcio and Mellino 2010). I have sought to address this through an ethnographic study that explores how people negotiate the lived experience of race and cultural difference in the street markets around the ‘Ferrovia’, the name given to the area around Piazza Garibaldi central train station. This area is a key site of social interaction across the boundaries of difference in Naples and the markets that populate the streets there provide opportunities for both economic collaboration and casual socialisation. Markets play a key role in providing work for the unemployed and this ties together the fates of both Neapolitans and newer arrivals in the city. My aim is to explore how particular types of talk underpin the production of ‘meaning-making’ in the hostile and convivial cultural practices that are inscribed in the life of the Neapolitan pavement (Drew and Hall 1998, p.205; Gilroy 2004).

The study is inspired by previous work into the nature of the relationship between language and struggles around questions of race and racism. In particular I am referring to Roger Hewitt (1986) and Geneva Smitherman’s scholarship, but I will discuss the ways in which this literature has been helpful to me more fully in the following chapter on key concepts and theories. Much of it comes from sociology, anthropology and sociolinguistics and focuses on language use as an index of ideological creativity in fraught, ethnically diverse urban settings in English-speaking countries. More recent work done in Italy (Guerini 2002; Sarnelli 2003) – which will, again, be discussed further in the next chapter – has started to recognise the effect that migration has had on speaking practices and language attitudes over the last couple of decades. However it lacks the sense of a connection between these local transcultural practices and the wider issues at stake in daily talk between people across racialised boundaries. The people

who took part in my research over nine months of ethnographic fieldwork were living and working in desperate circumstances; but I found that pride, humorous banter and levels of survival also existed within this context. I will argue that we need to make greater use of language as a tool for understanding these things within Sociology. The project's focus on language seeks to revive sociological discussions about local, lived experience and its connection to pressing social, political and economic realities in a way that is capable of attending to the global multilingual reality. It contributes to our understandings of the particular ways in which race, racism and postcoloniality is currently being articulated in Italy today. Finally, the thesis also attempts to offer alternative imaginaries that might alleviate some of the frustrations I expressed above about how racism is thought through and addressed in both action and research.

The research is guided by three interlocking research questions which developed in the early stages of the project and evolved as time went on:

- \* How does social interaction in street markets maintain, dismantle or produce racialised boundaries in Naples?
- \* How are notions of difference belonging and positionality defined, contested and negotiated in interaction through particular types of talk in these markets?
- \* How do these meaning-making processes feed up from the pavement to wider activities going on in the city?

## Culture, Language and Difference

In order to more fully introduce the intellectual framework of the thesis it is necessary to break down what I mean when I connect terms like cultural meaning-making, language practices and social difference together.

I am taking the position that cultures are not imposed but are something people act to produce in ways that are fluid, mobile and contingent (Bhabha 1990, p.3; Gilroy 2000, pp.84-5). Moreover, cultures are not bounded entities but are a global or planetary fusion of their relationship to their own components as well as to external components (Glissant 1997, pp.165-9). I have been influenced by Glissant's argument that this transcultural planetary consciousness, what he calls 'Relation', is guided by a fraught, linguistic principle (Glissant 1981, pp.793-6; 1997, p.107). Thus talk plays a fundamental role in complex processes of transcultural and intersubjective meaning-making. This way of thinking about culture and language became familiar following the 'discursive turn' in the social sciences. In particular Stuart Hall and Homi Bhabha asked that attention be drawn to language in order to understand diverse and conflicting productions of cultural meaning-making around questions of race and racism (Bhabha 1998; Drew and Hall 1999, p.205; Hall 1990). Theorising this involves articulating the link between discourse and practice or understanding practices within the material context of their meaning. Attention to culture, meaning and language is important because of the vital way they constitute the economic, political and material (Drew and Hall 1998, pp.222-225). Voloshinov's (1986) and Bakhtin's (1981; 1984; 1986) philosophy of language, which seeks to define the ways in which intersubjective dialogue can inform ambivalent and multiaccentual ideological change, has been particularly instructive for me in carrying out this task. Also Glissant's (1981; 1997) conceptualisation of multilingualism as the central outcome of the unequal transcultural encounters of modernity is useful in that it proposes the multilingual as a 'counterpoetics' to monolingual forces of exclusion and subordination. I feel that the connection between multilingual language practices and the economic, political and

material must be brought to the fore again in sociological analyses of the contemporary global reality characterised by superdiversity and unequal conditions of labour.

Significantly, the episode at the Kristall Hotel is explained as the result of pre-existing tensions escalating over questions of speaking and power. I would also like to argue that attention to cultural meaning-making and talk is key to understanding the particular interrelatedness that occurs across racialised boundaries in Naples. Here, a national politics about race collides with a protective regional identity, predicated around the use of dialect, which makes the question of communication during daily situations of intersubjective interaction particularly pressing. Naples' history as a Mediterranean port and capital city means it has always been a globalised, multicultural and multilingual reality. But it is also the site of a wounded and 'diglot' linguistic history whereby one state-sponsored language (Italian) has historically tried to dominate and undermine the spoken language in the streets (Glissant 1997, pp.106-7). These forms of linguistic and cultural violence are intimately linked to the history of Italian nation-building and the subordinated political and economic role assigned to Naples following Italian Unification. Language is an important optic through which these histories of difference are worked through, and through which new social changes are addressed and dealt with. This is particularly true in an area of the city where the realities of endemic unemployment, economic crisis and globalised migration are most felt: in the licensed and unlicensed street markets around Piazza Garibaldi train station where migrants and Neapolitans work side by side in the quest to survive and prosper. Attention to the role talk plays in maintaining or disrupting ideas about race in a context where, as Bauman (2004) describes it, people have been made into human waste, is central to an understanding of how belonging and positionality are being provisionally worked out at this time.

Babylon acts as a powerful metaphor through which to narrate the transcultural communicative repertoires I have sought to web together in this thesis. It unites three images that tell a complex story of power and how it can be mitigated by struggle: languages, difference and the urban. Languages and difference because the story of the Tower of Babel, which may or may not have been built in the city of Babylon itself, can be read as an etiology of linguistic and cultural difference. The urban because Babylon embodies an urban referent and, as a legendary, corrupt and imperial city of the ancient world, has been used throughout history by both the powerful and the powerless to reflect upon and act against the effects of decadence, corruption, and destructiveness. The Kristall Hotel stabbing points to the ways in which multiple and emergent forms of difference in Naples can be met with incomprehension and violent suppression. But there is also a political alternative to miscommunication and silence. Glissant uses the metaphor of linguistic confusion and the Tower of Babel to explain the creative and emancipatory potential of the multilingual element of transcultural interactions. This is as much a description of real processes at work as a call to action:

‘On the other side of the bitter struggles against domination and for the liberation of the imagination, there opens up a multiply-dispersed zone in which we are gripped by vertigo. But this is not the vertigo preceding apocalypse and Babel’s fall. It is the shiver of a beginning, confronted with extreme possibility. It is possible to build the Tower – *in every language.*’ (1997, p.109)

## Chapter Summaries

In the following chapter I outline the key conceptual ideas, substantive literature and social histories that have helped me to understand Naples, and the events I witnessed in street markets there. I use the images inspired by Babel – language, difference, and the

urban – to organise this reading into three key thematic areas that situate Naples within local, national and global trajectories.

In Chapter Three I describe the ways in which I observed, recorded and analysed linguistic interaction in the field, and examine the practical implications of an ethnography that focuses on speaking to think about race and racism. I speak about the politics of paying attention to and communicating multilingual data, the ways in which my own linguistic subjectivity guided me in the field, and the linguistic and cultural dynamics of my principle field sites and protagonists.

Chapter Four introduces the relational logic of street markets as sites of precarious money-making for internally-stratified and subaltern groups of people in Naples. I argue that discourses about market vending as a profession and market cries – transcultural speech performances related to buying and selling such as bartering in English or market spiel – do the work of helping people to get by, or ‘arrangiarsi’, by enabling both a material and spiritual resistance to power and subjection.

In the following chapter I attend to the ways in which particular sorts of darkly humorous language, such as banter and catcalling, are invoked, mainly by Neapolitan men, to assert power differentials and police heteronormative boundaries on the Neapolitan pavements around which street markets proliferate. These ambivalent joking practices are both part of an ancient genealogy of the social relations between men and women in the Mediterranean; and are connected to the enlightenment legacy of modernity in the city, which manifests particularly through the fear of miscegenation. They also relate to the forms of precariousness introduced in Chapter Four because of the ways in which they allow certain people to win a greater sense of agency in the face of oppression.

Following that is a chapter that more closely seeks to address the ways in which Naples' history of linguistic and cultural multiplicity and subordination creates particular conditions for speaking across racialised boundaries in the contemporary reality resulting from globalised migration. I introduce the idea of talking about talking which functions as mobile speech genre for people to dialogically negotiate contested ideas about difference, belonging and positionality as part of daily interactions in street markets and other public spaces across the city.

Chapter Seven is about communication breakdown. It's about seeking to define the threshold where the negotiations I have been describing in the previous three chapters reach the edge of sociality and fail. This involves forms of linguistic violence and the refusal to speak to or, conversely, accept you can understand the Other. The patterns of culture and communication related to Naples' history as a port suggest that we all speak, even under unequal, improvisational and ambiguous conditions. But it also matters politically when contact falls apart if we are going to understand something about the particular articulations of race and racism in the city. Why and how does the multilingual babel induce a catastrophic and muddled vertigo?

Finally, Chapter Eight attends to the ways in which people in street markets in Neapolitan Babylon seek to mitigate oppressive and corrupt interventions on the part of powerful state institutions and organised crime. The street market figures as a nodal point of this crisis: the solution, cause and primary arena of struggle. These efforts are not contained within the market but spread out across the city to involve other social actors and become part of wider national and transnational movements. The chapter looks at the contentious language through which vendors live, act and survive the spectre of disposability, death and decay that surrounds them. It also explores the

improvisational and ambiguous forms of solidarity that emerge across cultural and linguistic boundaries in the moments when people have to work together and partially overthrow hegemony.

In the concluding chapter I bring together the various interactive components of Neapolitan market life explored in the preceding chapters to offer my own meta-theory of why transcultural language practices in Naples tell an important story about social struggles around questions of race and racism in the city. I argue that the matter-of-fact way in which people in Naples deal with the challenges posed by multicultural multilingualism in an economically-fraught social reality points towards an alternative choice about how to live with difference that should inform both our scholarship of race and racism as well as the ways that we seek to organise politically.

## Chapter Two: Conceptualising the Multilingual in Naples

In the introductory chapter I argued that Babylon was a useful metaphor for thinking through the struggles-in-language around questions of belonging that take place in the street markets of the Ferrovia. In keeping with the different images brought up by the idea of Babylon I will now discuss the theoretical and substantive literatures about language, difference and the urban that have helped me to think about multilingual language practices in Naples as a particular sort of transcultural intersubjective social process and political project.

### Language

There are a number of different ways in which I have been thinking about the language practices taking place within the overarching motif of multilingualism in this project. These include language as sets of dialogic speech genres, as communication, as part of humorous convivial or conflictual performances, and types of talk like swearing and greeting. As I explained in the introduction, this comes both from an epistemological and ontological position that attention to language enables an understanding of wider social, economic and political issues; as well as from a conviction that language is a key lens through which to understand pressing issues around belonging and difference in Naples in particular. In order to explain more about Naples' linguistic and cultural context I am going to first outline a short history of language in the city. Following that I will describe some of the urban anthropological and sociolinguistic work which has inspired this study and which the thesis seeks to respond to and build upon. Finally I reflect upon the ways in which I have theorised and framed different speaking practices throughout the thesis.

## A Short History of Language in Naples

Politics surrounding language are an important feature of the history of Italian Unification through which Naples went from being capital of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies under Bourbon rule to become part of a new Italian state towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. At this moment Naples lost the titles and privileges that had come with being a capital city and sank into an economic decline from which it has never recovered (Allum 1973, p.23; Chambers 2008, pp.76, 112). The cultural imperialism which accompanied these processes of economic and political expropriation often centred on the question of language, as the emerging official language of the new Italian state, which was supposed to unify the peninsula and create an Italian ‘people’, relegated all other spoken and written linguistic norms, and particularly southern ones, to the inferior status of dialect (Verdicchio 1997, p.27). To this day ‘dialects’ like Neapolitan are considered by outsiders to be inferior, uneducated and uncivilised languages that associate the speaker with being overly emotional and irrational (see Belmonte 1979, p.5). This attitude is attributed generally to dialects in Italy, except that in Naples it is tied up with the pain of wounded regional pride and subordination that came from the city’s fall from grace.

It is popularly claimed that contemporary standard Italian is a Northern, or Tuscan, Italian, imposed following the annexation of the Italian South; but this is somewhat simplistic. ‘Italian’, which came about as a written norm that was basically homogeneous and developed by scholars over the course of a number of centuries, spread slowly across the Italian region to end up in the mouths of a limited group of alphabetised Italians from the Renaissance onwards. This language was not the same language actually spoken by the Florentine majority, but a literary language used by a

cosmopolitan elite (Tesi 2005, pp.105-9). The situation in Naples was quite particular. By the 17<sup>th</sup> Century ‘parlar toscano’ (speaking Tuscan) became a key sign of prestige amongst Naples’ aristocratic class (Tesi 2005, pp.105-9). However, the spoken norm across all social classes in Naples remained Neapolitan from the 18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. This is because rich and poor people have historically lived in the same neighbourhood with rich people living on the top floors of buildings and poor people living on the bottom floors. This close cohabitation should not be misunderstood as interclass solidarity but as a particular form of vertical hierarchy reflected in the design of the city (De Blasi 2002, p.125).

Across the peninsula the majority of working class people continued to speak their local language throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries until the question of forming a unitary national language – through obligatory schooling and literacy programmes as well as by regulating institutional and media languages – was taken up more enthusiastically by the fascist regime in the 1920s and 1930s (Tesi 2005, pp.199-201). Following the end of WW2, and the economic boom that brought televisions into the houses of ordinary Italians, the numbers of people speaking both Italian and dialect, or exclusively Italian, steadily increased. A combination of local and regional spoken Italians and dialects came about alongside the written norm. The massive post-war internal migration of poor Southern Italians to Rome and the industrialising North led to further standardisation of the spoken norm and actually contributed to ‘southernising’ the official state language to a great extent (2005, pp.214-218). This shows that formal linguistic norms are, of course, open to cross-fertilisation and reflective of changing historical circumstances and political ideologies. What it is possible to trace from this brief account is the ways in which language ideologies have historically divided Italians

along classed and racialised lines that mirror the forms of internal stratification and hierarchy that pre-date, but were cemented by, the Unification period and then fascism.

Naples' history as a key Mediterranean port and capital city of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies also means that it has always been a meeting place of many different people, all speaking different languages. Then, as now in a context of globalised migration, many residents in the city didn't actually speak fluent Neapolitan and people who have lived in the city for many generations have always been used to competently communicating with newer arrivals who speak different languages to them without feeling threatened or tempted to codify local spoken norms in any way (De Blasi 2002, p.137; Marcato and De Blasi 2005, pp.118-120)<sup>2</sup>. What passes for 'Neapolitan' in Naples is actually a multiplicity of speaking practices that are fluid, mobile and creolising (Marcato and De Blasi 2005, p.120). However dialect use today is strongly linked to social marginalisation as the social makeup of neighbourhoods has changed and people who grow up in areas with high levels of educational incompleteness and unemployment are more likely to speak only Neapolitan (De Blasi 2002, pp.133-135). Middle class Neapolitans connect the speaking of dialect with base and criminal behaviour that is seen to take place in these impoverished neighbourhoods (2002, pp.131, 139).

### Urban Sociolinguistics and Anthropological Work on Language

Recent sociolinguistic work done on Italy reflects a profoundly multilingual contemporary situation where the status and proliferation of different codes, repertoires and linguistic/social variables appear along a constantly shifting speech continuum (Parry 2010, pp.327-8). There is little agreement amongst experts as to the discrete

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<sup>2</sup> Note also that the spoken norm in Naples was never the same thing as the official written language of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (Marcato and De Blasi 2005, p.119).

categorisation of people's language into different patois or *koiné* dialects; Italianised dialects or dialectised Italians; popular, folk, or 'working class' Italian; informal regional or common Italian; or formal regional or common Italian. In fact, Trumper (1989, pp.31-7) argues that what really matters for understanding the Italian situation of diglossia is how and why people choose and switch between codes, not what the variability between codes actually is. As already pointed to above, work on different repertoires and switching between Neapolitan and Italian in Naples points towards a linguistic reality of mixed language usage depending on the context of communication, family background and identity of all the speakers involved (Bianchi et al. 2005; Giuliano 2006; Marcato and De Blasi 2005). Work that looks at language practices amongst migrants in urban scenarios in Italy is useful for getting a picture of how language attitudes and use are connected to the encounter between Italians and newcomers. For example, whilst migrants have a blurred conceptualisation of the distinction between dialect and Italian, they have fully digested the notion that dialect is both inferior but key to forming friendships and making claims for belonging in informal situations (Bagna et al. 2002, pp.210-211; Guerini 2002). Some of my research participants who were migrants spoke of using Neapolitan both with distaste and humour, admitting that they loved using dialect even if it wasn't respectful and that sometimes they felt they had no choice but to do so. Markets, however, factor as important sites of encounter across transcultural boundaries and the mixing of dialect and Italian is a key feature of the language of migrants who work there side by side with Italians (D'Agostino et al. 2002, p.267). Migrant street vendors also use particular forms of greeting that are not accepted in other working situations, like laughing and calling out fake names to passers-by as well as using dialect, in order to cement their position and encourage sales (Tucciarone 2002). In Chapter Four I talk about these kinds of

humorous greetings in my own field research. Schmid (2002) has done an interesting study on Italian ‘foreigner talk’ which records that not only do Italians attempt to make themselves understood to migrants by raising their voices and exaggerating their intonation like in other countries, they also switch into languages like English and French. This would seem to reflect a history of emigration and colonisation by foreign powers that has brought Italian people into unequal contact with many different languages. I explore these kinds of practice further in Chapters Six and Seven, which examine the fraught use of English in Poggioreale market, one of my field sites.

Ethnographic work that was carried out in marketplaces in Naples in the early 2000s also reveals the importance of language use in this context. Dines’ work on the marketplaces around Piazza Garibaldi, the central train station in Naples, notes the number of languages being learnt and spoken as part of transcultural, transactional relationships (2002, p.184). I found that this situation has stabilised over the last decade, as many migrants have settled and learnt Italian. The main language of transcultural trade in the street markets around the Ferrovia seems to be Italian, or a Neapolitanised Italian with a few foreign words sprinkled in. Poggioreale market presents a slightly different linguistic picture due to the nature of trade it practices, as will be explained in the following chapter. Humour also plays a key role in market interactions. Sarnelli (2003) describes the use of obscenities and mimicry between Neapolitan and Senegalese traders in Neapolitan markets as a ‘joking relationship’ that reveals the ambiguous and improvisational ways in which people deal with the cultural differences that are now a normal and unavoidable part of their daily lives. Harney (2006) examines the ways that rumours about Naples’ informal economy have spread from mouth to mouth amongst migrating Bangladeshi men to position the city as a good place to find work on an irregular basis before moving further north to settle down.

There is some older anthropological literature on community separation in rural Italy which also shows how language is a key tool for maintaining the sexual contract between men and women in public spaces (Harding 1975; Reiter 1975). In the case of the contract being disobeyed, ‘sexual preserves’ are maintained through joking (Reiter 1975, p.258) and the sexual division of ‘verbal roles’ – distinct topics of talk and the practice of maintaining secrecy amongst men or gossiping amongst women (Harding 1975). This work posits marketplaces and other public spaces in Naples as diverse, hybrid and multiple spaces that carry out particular kinds of gendered and racialised commerce according to the time of day, week or season, and are dramatically changing their face as a result of migration and globalisation. I explore this further in Chapter Five which looks at gendered and racialised linguistic violence in street markets.

There is a wide tradition of sociolinguistic and anthropological scholarly work on language and speech in ethnically diverse, urban settings which has been instructive for me. This work, which is mainly based in a UK or US context, uses language to understand the subtle and contradictory ways that people negotiate ‘common sense’ ‘notions of ‘natural difference and incompatibility’ across ‘racialised boundaries’ (Phoenix 2004, pp.38-40). For example, Rampton (1997a, 1997b, 2003, 2010), Harris (2003) and Jurgen (2005) have written papers that explore how new ethnic identities and a sense of ‘liminality’ are creating innovative ‘language-crossing’ practices or contemporary vernaculars that challenge dominant views about insiders and outsiders within a culture. Much of this has grown out of earlier work on language, ethnicity and difference by people like Gumperz (1982; 2003), Hymes (1996) and Parkin (1977). Gumperz’ work on interethnic miscommunication explores ways in which intonation, tone and rhythm produce misunderstandings during transcultural interaction, perpetuating negative stereotypes about minority groups of people (1982, pp.172-186;

2003). Hymes argues for a need to study ‘ways of speaking’ – how people actually encounter and make use of languages around them – in order to understand wider questions of inequality in social life resulting from race, classed and gendered cultural patterns, institutions and value systems (1996 pp.26, 56-9). Parkin’s work on language practices amongst young people in Kenya proposes the idea of an ‘emergent multilingualism’ to understand the mixing together of different linguistic codes in a postcolonial situation where languages have different moral significances (1977).

Anthropological explorations, from the 1980s and 1990s, on the use of creole by black and white young people in the UK have also helped me to draw a link between subordinated languages with a ‘symbolic status’ (Hewitt 1986, p.161), and their re-appropriation as part of antiracist strategies. This seems to me to be sympathetic to the ways in which different languages are being used across transcultural boundaries in Neapolitan markets today: a city with the particular linguistic and cultural heritage described above. In particular, the detailed emphasis this work places on switching between different languages – as a form of resistance against institutional oppression (Gilroy and Lawrence 1988, pp.132-140; Sebba 1993) and as ‘acts of identity’ whereby claims about ethnicity are linked to linguistic questions, and, in hostile circumstances, draw communities closer together (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985) – has had an important effect on how I have understood the linguistic tactics of my own research informants. Hewitt’s book *White Talk, Black Talk* (1986) looks at the use of Jamaican patois by black and white young people in South London as a ‘formulaic corpus’ which can be drawn on to ‘transpose struggles over power into struggles within signification’ (pp.8, 98). Hewitt concludes that, whilst all social relations between groups of people would need to be transformed in order to overthrow racism, ‘partial alternative structures of association, of coding, of symbolism’ are also engendered in the interactive

processes between black and white people that represent ‘semantic ‘guerilla tactics’’ (1986, pp.205, 235). At the same time, his exploration of ritualised ludic and competitive uses of creole amongst black and white young men also signals the ways in which the semiotic of gender can be appropriated by racial and ethnic referents (pp.170-179). These forms of ethnically-marked masculine banter can be compared to the sorts of language – such as catcalling – that are directed at women by men and which can more clearly be seen as forms of harassment and social control (Hewitt 1986, p.157; Kissling 1991). The distinction that Hewitt makes between language as part of a collective struggle and sometimes also weapon of differential control between the same people is echoed in my work on language in Neapolitan street markets.

### Theorising Transcultural Language Practices in Naples

#### Dialogical Speech Genres and Ideological Creativity

Voloshinov and Bakhtin’s writings about language suggest ways in which the collective material condition of the utterance is connected to and negotiated within society’s larger ideological superstructure. Voloshinov states, in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1986), that the utterance is, ‘the most sensitive index of social changes’ and of changes ‘still in the process of growth, still without definitive shape and not as yet accommodated into already regularised and fully defined ideological systems’ (pp.15-19). He suggests that the sign, or utterance, has ‘two faces’ because its role in social change is affected by having to pass through intersecting and different social interests. This ‘social multiaccentuality’ is key because it reveals the ambiguous role the utterance plays in the articulation of ideologies, particularly at moments of ‘social struggle’

(1986, pp.23-4).<sup>3</sup> According to Voloshinov, individuals use culturally, historically and ideologically available language to speak and thus ideological habits are deeply rooted in language. However, ideologies are formed as part of a dialogic reasoning so they always have a ‘contrary theme of common sense’ that challenges the dominant ideology of the time (Billig 2001, pp.217-220). Therefore ideas about the world are generated and re-imagined through talk as part of a ‘dialogic’ process. Talking is not simply about transmitting ideas but originates in the interactive and reciprocal social processes that I am interested in understanding in Naples. Thus Dialogism allows me to pay attention to struggles over the use and meaning of culture in the process of its production (Maybin 2001, p.64).

Voloshinov further clarifies that the relations of production in a particular social and political system govern this dialogical verbal contact between people. He suggests paying close attention to the unofficial discussions, exchanges of opinion, or chance exchanges of words in ‘speech performances’ that make reference to issues surrounding work, politics and ideological creativity in particular contexts (1986, p.20). Each speech performance is then subjectified through the responsive understanding of a listener who goes on to produce a counter-statement. The ensuing collision between different social accents generates a site of struggle where cultural meaning is contested and negotiated (Voloshinov 1986, pp.40-41). As Maybin explains, for Voloshinov there are multiple evaluative layers that frame the production of meaning from the many possible connotations and associations in each ‘speech act’. The authority of the person

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<sup>3</sup> There is some confusion over the authorship of Voloshinov’s and Bakhtin’s works (Maybin 2001, p.64). In so far as both address the voice, dialogue and the ideological nature of language they are treated in this text as being of the same author, or set of theoretical ideas, although the two different names will be used when referencing.

producing the utterance plays a critical role in defining the boundary between the listener and the speaker. Meaning then arises out of an ‘electric spark’ between the listener and the speaker: the listener orientates towards their own inner consciousness while the balance of inequality and subordination affects the transmission and absorption of particular ideas (2001, pp.68-9).

Bakhtin conceptualises the production of meaning in language as a struggle occurring through ‘centripetal’ forces, that seek to unify and centralise the ‘verbal-ideological world’, versus ‘centrifugal’ forces of ‘diversification’ which, at their height allow for open and provisional discourse. This tension operates at all levels of language and between all social groups (Bakhtin 1981, pp.271-2, 291-2; Maybin 2001, pp.65-6; Smith 2004, p.263). He also identifies a number of ‘speech genres’ which are central mediators of this tension-in-language. The themes, constructions and linguistic styles of Bakhtin’s ‘speech genres’ are particular according to situation and function in ways that are plastic and flexible (Maybin 2001, p.66). He writes, in a later essay, that ‘typical situations’ and ‘typical themes’ of speech communities generate their own speech genres as a result of ‘particular contacts between the meanings of words and actual concrete reality’ (Bakhtin 1986, pp.61, 87). ‘Types of relations’ between the participants in a conversation and ‘particular conditions’ of communication also give rise to particular speech genres and styles of their delivery (1986, p.64). The utterances that make up these genres, as Voloshinov also claims, are filled with ‘*dialogic overtones*’, reflections and refractions of past utterances, that are taken on and adapted by the speaker (Bakhtin 1986, pp.91-2). It is also vital to take into account the attitude of the speaker towards the Other in order to understand what’s at stake in the act of speaking (1986, p.97). Multiple, unmediated ‘speech genres’ cohabit, contradict and multiply at the same time creating a hybrid ‘heteroglossia’ that governs the relationship

between language and culture (Bakthin 1981, pp.270-272, 291-292; Maybin 2001, pp.66-7; Smith 2004, p.263). They also play a particularly important role in moments of crisis to provide a ‘descriptive frame’ that allows subaltern people to ‘think, act, and survive’ in the face of hegemony (Ries 1997, p.51; Smith 2004, p.253). It is up to the scholar in the field to identify the dialogical principle of particular types of speech genres as they emerge in talk.

### Language Tactics and Languages of Resistance

Other scholarly work also provides valuable insights about the ways in which language can co-opt and reconfigure centrepetal and hegemonic speech genres in order to critique power and find new ways to collectively challenge hegemony. I have used this work to think about how my research participants faced power, both in their working day, and as part of organised resistance strategies as their livelihoods were progressively threatened over the course of the time I spent with them.

Steinburg (1999, p.750) argues that ‘contentious discourses’ or ‘repertoires’ play a key role in the creation of strategy as part of a relational and direct struggle over meaning between powerholders and challengers. Scott (1985, p.XV), on the other hand, argues that it is principally the prudent and submissive language that forms part of the everyday resistance strategies whereby subordinated people, though unable to change the state apparatus, try to work the system to ‘their minimum disadvantage’. He argues that disguised public expressions of dissent, in the form of gossip, jokes and codes, are important because they reveal the ‘infrapolitics’ of the powerless. Culturally-informed verbal practices like jokes, euphemisms, exhortations of despair and codes create a disguise of ‘*ideological* unsubordination’ from where people can construct an anti-hegemonic ‘imaginative capacity’ which may or may not be acted on depending on the

situation (Scott 1990, pp.19, 90-92). These strategies are often only partially successful. For example, ‘linguistic veiling’ is a key infrapolitical protective strategy that powerless people have used historically. But, whilst pretending not to speak or understand is an effective survival strategy, it also gives fuel to stereotypes about the inherent inferiority of subaltern groups of people. It illustrates the ways in which people are obliged to carry out a performance of dominance whereby the hegemonic public transcript is reproduced by both the dominant and the dominated (Scott 1990, pp.32-26). When desperate need arises, he argues that subaltern people take a strategic or dialogic approach to making rights claims that relies on a careful balance of submission and rebellion (Scott 1990, p.92). The resulting ‘onstage’ political performances are honed and refined through ‘offstage’ ideology formation and are not just be about mitigating material exploitation but also about protecting dignity and autonomy (Scott 1990, pp.8, 23).

De Certeau’s argument is that the particular dynamics of the city create the conditions for talk to effect change from below. He maintains that it is the speech acts of people making do and creating spaces of dissent from within the system that act to appropriate the topography of the city and create alternative ways of living in it. Their language is tactical – not strategic – because they cannot rely on force in the way that the powerful can and so their success is partial and fragmentary. However, it is in this way that subaltern groups of people can establish a certain amount of creativity and plurality without being able to operate entirely outside of the system. A keen spatial awareness is key to the success of these intersubjective and communicative tactics, and speech acts are part of a ‘spatial acting-out of the place’ through which possibilities for togetherness are explored in talk (De Certeau 1988, pp.XX, 12, 29-30, 97-8).

## Humorous Language and the Grotesque

Bakhtin identifies certain spatio-temporal instances when the utterance has a greater transformative potential. In *Rabelais and his World* (1984), Bakhtin says that during carnival ‘a special idiom of forms and symbols’ work to turn the world inside out and up-end hierarchy in a way that is not merely destructive, but also regenerative (1984, pp.10-12). Over the centuries the ‘festive laughter’ of the carnival has diminished but its utopian character survives in the raucous, billingsgate language of the marketplace (1984, p.9). This laughter is generated by abusive and insulting language as well as profanities and threats which have an ambivalent nature, working to destroy but also regenerate. Comic imagery, which particularly focuses on the grotesque and the functioning of the body with relation to food, sex and defecation, also works on the same principle. Bakhtin explains that the ‘familiar speech’ of the marketplace is related to laughter because it is excluded from official speech and so takes on the ambivalent and yet utopian potential of carnival (1984, pp.17-18). The temporary suspension of hierarchies creates an ambivalence during communication allowing for new kinds of meaning to emerge (1984, p.16). The idea of the carnivalesque and its contemporary relevance to marketplace interactions has very practically influenced the way I have thought about the selection and definition of research sites in this project. The festive laughter of my market sites spread out along the pavements of the city centre and onto the main forms of public transport that carried my vendor participants and their merchandise to and from work. This was why I ended up taking notes both in street markets and on trains and buses.

Other scholarly work on humour in situations of oppression has also provided a valuable lens through which to view the joking language and comedic behaviour I saw being regularly exercised in Neapolitan street markets. The forms of top-down

racialised and economic subordination experienced by my participants worked alongside a differential power dynamic *within* the groups of people working next to each other on the pavement. In particular I often saw Neapolitan vendors play the role of the joker with regard to migrant men and women in markets as part of both a comedic self-effacement and sometimes as an act of dominance. These performances echoed the grand tradition of Pulcinella (Punch), the stock character of Neapolitan puppetry, and the late comedy actor Totò.

Passerini's work on irreverent behaviour, ‘‘subversive’ slips of the tongue’, double meanings and wit referring to the baser functions of the body during fascism is helpful for understanding this. She argues they reveal the small ways in which people sought to undermine the authoritarian regime and retain small amounts of dignity and autonomy. The oppression of free speech and move to create a unifying ‘totalitarian language’ were key dimensions of fascism. However this resistant comic behaviour of the people was double-edged. It both subverted and restored order to become merely a ‘collective sneer’, and could also allow people to be hurt and sent up at the same time (1987, pp.67-126). However, she also points toward the ideological potential of such language practices. In a later work she describes how the laughter and mockery of the piazza got passed up to the students protesting during 1968 to become part of a cultural guerilla tactic designed to critique and transform social reality through language (1988, pp.112-114).

Smitherman explains that hierarchical ‘language attitudes’ allow dominant groups of people to use language in a simple way as a tool of oppression against the powerless (1977, p.199). As she states: ‘Who’s speaking ‘the’ language and who’s speaking only a dialect of ‘the’ language depends on who has the army’ (1977, p.193). Her work looks

at speech play in African American English. She describes humorous language as a form of stress release and social commentary amongst subaltern people who would be in danger were they to openly resist oppression (1977, 2006, p.199, 2007).

### Glissant's Multilingual Counterpoetic

Glissant's idea of Relation (1981; 1997) helps me to think more carefully about the intersubjective and transcultural dimension of talk in the context of Neapolitan markets. As I have already mentioned, Glissant states that linguistic interaction is the underlying force guiding competing projects of cultural meaning-making (Glissant 1981, pp.793-6; 1997, p.107). For him this linguistic principle is moderated by two forms of historically-inflected identity: 'root identity' and 'Relation identity'. He explains that a pulsation towards monolingualism has been intimately linked to the nation-building projects and imperialist endeavours that accompanied the rise of modernity in the West (1997, pp.23, 49; 1981, p.551). The symbolic and material violence of this encounter has had profound ramifications for the way belonging is articulated in the contemporary moment. Most importantly, it has generated particular forms of 'root identity', or the idea of a transparent and clear form of belonging which finds itself in distant past and myth and ratifies itself through the possession of land (1997, p.143). The relationship between languages in this environment, particularly when one language officially dominates over one or more spoken languages, is political and thus generative of subjection and struggle (Glissant 1981, pp.560-561). Glissant defines this as 'diglossia': the domination of one 'vehicular' language over one or several other 'vernacular', or spoken languages (1997, pp.118-119). An understanding of the fraught, ideological and context-specific processes at work in this hierarchical ordering of languages illuminates important aspects of intersubjective interaction across boundaries of difference.

On the other hand, Glissant explains that a non-reductive relationship towards difference, a ‘Divers non universalisant’, has also occurred as a result of the various encounters of modernity, and this has allowed for the emergence of transverse, non-hierarchical and non-generalisable cultural configurations. ‘Relation identity’ is linked to this conscious and chaotic experience of transcultural interaction that is not interested in a rooted legitimacy: it ‘gives-on-and-with’ (1997, p.144). The poetic of ‘Relation’, or the ‘Relation planétaire’, starts from the irreducible difference of the Other and an attitude of equality and respect to them ‘as *different* from oneself’ (Glissant 1981, p.327, pp.799-800). As Britton explains, diversity, or ‘Divers’, is the most important value in Relation as it creates a totality or unity that explodes traditional definitions of centre and periphery and is never fixed, but produced through constantly shifting relations. As such it is uncontrollable and chaotic because it lacks a permanent essence. The logic of hybridity triumphs over one of rootedness or legitimacy (Britton 1999, pp.11-17). A ‘poetics of language-in-itself’, or a multilingual ‘Counterpoetics’ is key to this understanding of difference. Here language is not just interested in itself but expands, migrates and changes (1981, pp.627-8; 1997, p.25). Thus multilingualism is the violent but consensual creolising result of colonial contact (Glissant 1997, p.35).

Glissant contributes overall to an understanding of the intersubjective verbal-ideological processes explored by the scholars mentioned above by demanding that full attention is paid to the implications of multilingualism in these interactions. His writing provides insight on how to pay attention to the power dynamics invested in these dynamic and fluid interactions in order to tell an important story about different articulations of race, racism, difference and belonging. He argues that this involves paying attention to the linguistic creations springing from the friction between languages to produce innovative speaking practices or innovative relationships to speaking (1997, p.104). This requires

an attitude towards understanding interactions across the boundaries of difference that allows itself to remain opaque: it pays attention to the texture of the weave between people and does not seek to clarify and elucidate everything (1981, pp.14, 19; 1997, p.190). This challenges the western concept that links acceptance to detailed and transparent understanding because it constructs the Other as an '*object* of knowledge' (Britton 1999, pp.19-19). Instead you attempt to untangle the diglot linguistic creations people produce through plural and mobile forms of cultural meaning-making that are playful, horizontal and tactical (Glissant 1981, pp.793-6; 1997, p.120). This reveals the 'penetrable opacity' of Relation: 'a world in which one exists, or agrees to exist, with and among others' (Glissant 1997, p.114).

## Difference

Avtar Brah has pointed out that racisms are historically contingent and context-specific. She proposes an approach to doing research that considers how macro-level analyses of various types of social differentiation help to determine local situations of racism (2000, p.513). The particular history of difference in Naples is connected to the ways in which Neapolitans welcome, or don't welcome, newcomers into their midst. Thus, the next part of the chapter aims to provide some initial thoughts on how to think about race, racism, ethnicity and difference in Naples today within the wider legacy of European enlightenment modernity. To shine a light on this I first discuss the impact of three interlinked historical trajectories: unification, colonialism and migration that position Naples within the wider history of European nation building. This needs to be conceptualised alongside an understanding of Naples as a historic port city and crossroad for multiple encounters across the boundaries of difference. As I have shown in the first part of this chapter, politics surrounding language are an important feature of

this complex social history. Following this I give an account of the sociological literature about the people living in the city that I came into contact with as part of this research: the Neapolitan poor, or ‘popolino’, and the migrant groups that have started arriving over the last two decades and have come to work alongside the unemployed or underemployed popolino in the city. These three substantive areas form a large part of the scholarly work on Naples but they are never placed into direct conversation with each other, as I do here. I then consider how some of the conceptual work about belonging (Geschiere 2009; Yuval-Davis 2011; Bauman 1993), helps me to think through the encounter between the different people currently living and working side by side in Naples. I conclude by introducing the idea of particular local hegemonic masculinities (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005) as central to racialised articulations of belonging and exclusion on the Neapolitan pavement.

### Naples and the Nation: Unification, Colonialism and Migration

The history of Italian Unification (1780-1870) is, as Gramsci points out, a ‘historical fetish’: a transformation of different historical processes of creolisation into one eternal fantasy of the nation (2010, pp.44-5). It was a semi-colonial conquest, justified through ideological paradigms about civilising the noble and violent southern savage, and carried out by the troops of the royalist Piedmontese state in the north (Gramsci 2010, p.24; Gribaudi 1997, p.88)<sup>4</sup>. The economic and spiritual effects of Unification were

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<sup>4</sup> As Sidney Tarrow points out, southern Italy had in any case been a ‘semi-colonial’ territory from the 12th century and was largely governed through a ‘logic of colonial exploitation’ by a series of rulers, starting with the Normans (1996, p.394). In keeping with this rationale, the Bourbon rulers, who were overthrown by unification, failed to implement critical land reforms in the south and ideas about southern Italian inferiority also originated at this time (Verdicchio 1997, p.23). There is no space here to reflect properly upon the pre-unification period in Italy but, as Tarrow also points out, the southern regions should not be perceived as a homogeneous mass as they present differing levels of urbanisation, agrarian

devastating for the south. Changes to customs and tax laws, and the failure to introduce effective farming reforms, caused the death of southern agriculture and resulted in a violently suppressed peasant revolt and mass emigration (Allum 1973, pp.21-2; Verdicchio 1997, p.24). As I described in the first part of this chapter, linguistic and cultural oppression was intimately connected to the process by which Naples lost the privileges it had previously enjoyed as the capital city of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. This economic and cultural deprivation came to be described by Italian politicians as ‘The Southern Question’ from the early 1870s. From the beginning, pre-existing tropes of southern racial and cultural inferiority were invoked to explain the causes of the problem (Schneider 1998, pp.10-11; Verdicchio 1997, pp.21-9). Southern marginalisation was explained away as a result of a dysfunctional biological and cultural makeup, with southern Italian masculinity being stereotyped as possessive and violent and southern femininity as submissive (Capussotti 2013, p.270). These tropes were then given scientific authority through the work of positivist ethnologists like Alfredo Niceforo, Cesare Lombroso and Enrico Ferri, who measured southern Italian skulls and decreed that southerners were of African descent and so less civilised than their Aryan neighbours (Schneider 1998, p.11; Verdicchio 1997, p.30). But this is not the official story of Naples’ place within a unified Italy. Without understanding this history it is impossible to understand the tensions being articulated and negotiated in the city today. As Gramsci so eloquently explains:

‘The poverty of the Mezzogiorno was historically incomprehensible for the popular masses of the North; they could not comprehend that national unity was not achieved

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development, industrialisation, banditism and nascent mafia activity (1996, pp.392-393). Thus, Naples’ unification legacy has its own particular story, as I describe above.

on the basis of equality, but as the result of the hegemony of the North on the Mezzogiorno... the North was an “octopus” that enriched itself at the cost of the South, its industrial and economic progress was in a direct relationship to the impoverishment of southern industry and agriculture’ (Gramsci cited in Chambers 2008, p.111).

Interestingly, the first Italian imperial forays into Africa began at the same time as the annexation of southern Italy and the unification period. Eritrea was first invaded in 1885, the same year as the campaign against Sicilian peasant resistance groups or ‘fasci’. The massacres and summary executions that accompanied this invasion, as well as the creation of the infamous prison camp in Nocra, were also typical features of the war against the fasci in the Italian south (Del Boca 2005, pp.55-81; Verdicchio 1997, p.27). It is important to emphasise that Italian unification and Italian imperialism are all part of the same nationalist project to enrich the north (Del Boca 2005, pp.303-15; Gramsci 2010, p.24; Verdicchio 1997, p.22). Forms of violence that were not permitted in the Duchy of Savoy were exercised and experimented with on the new nation’s periphery as in the growing colonial territories abroad (Fanon 1963, p.38; Mbembe 2003, p.24). The forced labour camps along the Uebi Scebeli river in Somalia in the 1920s and 1930s; or the dumping of thousands of tons of chemical bombs over Ethiopia in 1935-7; or even the attempted genocide in Dalmatia, Montenegro and Slovenia towards the end of WWII do not, of course, have historical counterparts in the Italian national space (Del Boca 2005, pp.151-168, 194-230 and 237-254). It is important, however, to remember the 1938 race laws which marked the start of Italy’s active involvement in the Holocaust. Also, as Del Boca points out, the extreme violence and public displays of victims that characterised the Resistance and civil war of 1943-45 had already been seen elsewhere in Italy’s colonial spaces (2005 pp.277-8). Italy gave up its

colonial territories to the Allied Forces when the fascist regime fell and public discourse about Italian colonialism is, to this day, largely characterised by outright denial or underplayed as simply a feature of the fascist period.

Although liberal and fascist Italy cannot be disentangled as separate nation-building projects, Giuliani and Lombardi-Diop have argued that the fascist period was marked by a different approach to conceptualising race in the Italian peninsula. During this period there was an attempt to re-forge Italians as a mighty Mediterranean and Roman race. Italians were taught to define their own whiteness in relation to the black colonised Other, and not in relation to their own internal differences (2013). In particular, the colonies were seen as the crucible of an Italian or Mediterranean masculinity that, through war-making, became something both exotically and erotically virile and patriarchally familial (Giuliani 2013, p.263; Proglio 2013, p.325; Sabelli 2013, p.288). These fascist constructions of the male have produced a particular sort of Italian familism that persists to this day and is central to economic organisation in families (Ruspini 2009), as will become clear from my observations of the money-making practices involved in street market vending in the following chapters.

Southerners themselves were doubly implicated as both victims and perpetrators in the colonial projects of Italian modernity. Having been annexed from their own land in Italy, they were offered opportunities to settle on the colonial earth being annexed in north and east Africa (Gramsci 2010, p.73; Verdicchio 1997, pp.48-9). Emigration – to Italian colonies and other settlements in South America and Africa but, more commonly, to the United States, Australia and Northern Europe – was one of the few options available to the Southern Italian masses following Unification. Emigration has been described as both a southern revolution and part of the Italian nationalist and

imperialist venture (Verdicchio 1997, p.37). In two thirds of cases, the idea to emigrate was manufactured through trade agreements that exchanged Italy's labour surplus for beneficial trade and shipping agreements (Gabaccia 2000, pp.156-7; Snowden 1995, p.269). Many emigrants settled in the arrival country and many also returned after a number of years. Culture shock, particularly round questions of language use has played an important part in cyclical processes of departure and return, as Signorelli's work on hybrid emigrant Italian languages and their associated stigma shows (Signorelli 2006, p.111)<sup>5</sup>. Twenty five million people left Italy between 1876 and 1976, many from the Port of Naples which was the main point of departure (Chambers 2008, p.124; Verdicchio 1997, p.37). In 1913, at its peak, 200,000 people are recorded to have boarded ships leaving from Naples. Peasants, who had been forced off the land due to the economic policies of the new Italian state, made up 90 per cent of the departures (Gabaccia 2003, p.8; Verdicchio 1997, p.37). At least fifty per cent of these emigrants started returning from the 1930s onwards and, after WWII, a massive internal migration of southern Italians to the industrializing north started. Today Italians still emigrate internally and externally in their thousands even though globalised migration has transformed Italy into a receiving country of migrants over the last three decades (Signorelli 2006, p.33; Chambers 2008, p.125). Such a large-scale movement of people is not only traumatising for those who leave, but also for those who stay behind. The anthropologist Ernesto De Martino said that emigration was like death for the southern peasantry and the south is still scarred by this loss, absence and departure (Chambers 2008, p.126; Verdicchio 1997, p.49).

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<sup>5</sup> See also: Niederer, Arnoldo 1977 'Problemi della seconda generazioni di emigrati', in *La Lingua degli Emigranti*, ed. L. Zanier, Rimini-Firenze: Guaraldi and Signorelli, Amalia 1986 'Bilinguismo, multiculturalismo, ritorno al paese di origine', In *Studi emigrazione*, XXIII, n.81, pp.17-30.

The first waves of migration *to* Italy hark back to the mid-1930s, although it is only in the last fifty years that immigration has come to be tied to Italy's colonial legacy, with the arrival of Eritrean and Somali refugees. As I have said above, this initial period of migration from the global south was also marked by a steady stream of millions of returning Italian emigrants, though little is known about this. The sketchy data for both these migratory flows is a testament of the state's willing participation in the 'collective refusal to remember' the nationalist and colonial past that links these people in a shared history (Amato et al. 2009, pp.98-9; Chambers 2008, p.127). This period between the end of WW2 and the start of more intensified migration to Italy in the 1970s is also the site of another repressed history: that of the children born to Italian women and African American allied forces during the war, as well as to colonial settlers and African women in the Italian in the horn of Africa. The small amount of data relating to their experiences and treatment interrogates even more forcefully the myth of Italian openness and friendliness towards the Other (Pezzarossa 2013). The picture has become steadily more complicated since the 1970s, with the arrival of Cape Verdian and Dominican women and predominantly Ghanaian and Nigerian men. But it was in the 1980s and 1990s, with the arrival of Senegalese, Egyptian, Algerian, Philippino, Chinese, Sri Lankan, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, 'Eastern European' and Albanian people, that immigration came to be perceived publicly as a problem and immigration policies started to be devised (Colombo and Sciortino 2004, pp.27-9; Russo-Krauss 2005, pp.85-7). Italy's immigration policies largely follow European policies to come into alignment with the Schengen agreement. The Turco-Napolitano Law (legge 40/98) in 1993, which brought Italy fully into line with Schengen, contained number of progressive provisions – such as the right to health and education for all migrants – alongside more repressive measures. The Bossi-Fini Law (legge 89/02) in 2002 was produced in response to

populist pressure and reversed many of the more liberal sections of the Turco-Napolitano introducing further repressive measures such as increased deportations, the doubling of detention time and the tying of residence permits to employment. Despite this, the demands of the labour market continue to create a need for further migration causing quotas to be expanded which is followed by mass regularisation programmes that, nonetheless grant only precarious and short-term status to migrants (Schuster 2005, pp.760-61).

Increased immigration reflects the fact that Italy came to share, although belatedly in comparison, many common features with the other receiving countries across Europe – such as economic prosperity, state welfare provision and a relative salary structure – and is not, as is often claimed, a result of lax immigration policies and controls (Colombo and Sciortino 2004, p.15). It is currently documented that the non-EU migrant population in Italy is a little over 4.3 million, or around 7.4 per cent of the total population with the largest groups being Albanian, Chinese, Moroccan, Romanian, Phillipino and Ukrainian nationals (ISTAT 2013). These figures are similar to those across Europe and the numbers of family reunions show that some communities are stabilizing and setting down roots predominantly in the major urban centres: Milan, Rome and Naples (Amato et al. 2009, pp.25, 30). It is currently documented that there are 75,943 non-EU migrants regularly residing in Naples and the surrounding provinces (Tutttitalia 2011). The number of irregular and undocumented migrants can only be guessed at. Until the 1990s Naples figured as a point of entry and short stay before people moved on to jobs in northern Italy and elsewhere in Europe; but the figures show that over the last decade this situation has started stabilizing with 14 per cent of all migrants residing in the south as part of a growing population due in large part to births and family reunion (Amato 2006, p.66; ISTAT 2013). It is important to underline that

figures vary wildly and actual numbers of non-EU migrants are likely to be higher and more unstable due to the huge numbers of undocumented migrants and the constant slippage between different immigration statuses. They help only to give a basic picture and an idea of future tendencies (Schuster 2005, p.758; Amato et al. 2009, pp.19, 21). The highly diverse, feminised and politicised nature of contemporary migratory flows also present a similar picture to that seen across Europe and reflect the fact that postcolonial migration has been replaced by a ‘globalisation of migration’ (Phizacklea 2003, p.23).

### Naples as a Port City

Naples’ identity as a port city on the edge of Europe has meant it has been a significant location for arrivals and departures throughout history. Everyone from holidaying European nobility to foreign invaders and the emigrating southern peasantry have settled or passed through the city and left their mark there. The city’s maritime and ‘creolised past’ complicates and interrogates the narrative of nation building and unification that I have been describing in the previous section because its political, economic and geographical culture is marked by a Greek, Byzantine, Spanish, Saracen and Norman heritage in such a way that denies any neat separation of East and West, or centre and periphery (Chambers 2008, p.83-4, 88). Thus, the Partenopean city needs to be understood as part of a porous Mediterranean or as, ‘the meeting place of many peoples, and the melting-pot of many histories’ drawn together by the ‘living unity of the sea’ (Braudel 1995, p.231; Chambers 2008).

Other literature about port cities across the world has been instructive in helping me understanding the kinds of intersubjective dynamics and, particularly, locally-situated masculinities that can emerge within such a context. Trotter’s work on dockside

prostitution in South African ports reveals the port context as ‘simultaneously local, global and liminal’ (2008a, p.675; 2008b). The ‘cultural dexterity’ required of these women particularly rotates around their ability to negotiate the cultures of their potential clients, often by learning to speak their languages. Thus the port becomes the site of a ‘practical cosmopolitanism born of an acceptance of – and indifference to – difference’ (2008a, pp.684-5; 2008b, p.87). Robeson’s account of Millwall football fandom grounds the myths surrounding the club in the history London’s port culture and the emergence there of ‘cultural groupings’ like the *docker* and the *gangster* (2000, p.23). Key to the development of these ‘archetypal representations of masculinity’ are the ‘specific ecologies’ of South-East London’s portside history that has demonstrably characterised the development of the area and its people’ over history (2000, pp.41, 43). Both the *docker* and the *gangster* are ambiguous ‘folk-heroic’ figures associated with micro-criminality and violence (2000, pp.60-61).

As I showed in the previous section, the history of Naples is the history of how land and sea have been partitioned into legal borders that grant people rights on the basis of those same rights being refused to outsiders. However, it is also the history of how it has absorbed and incorporated foreign elements and pressures through trade and travel via the port (Chambers 2008, p.8, 81). A particular urban identity has come about in Naples as a result of its geographical location on the edge of the Mediterranean and the contested global movement it witnesses of people of people and things. The different cultural traces inscribed within the life of the city have also travelled with the people who have passed through it, informing the way Naples is seen by the rest of Italy and globally. For example, this comment from a 17<sup>th</sup> Century travel memoir:

‘Europe ends at Naples and ends badly. Calabria, Sicily and all the rest belong to Africa’

evokes orientalist and racialised ideas about Southern Europe that persist to this day (Gribaudi 1997, p.97). These ideas about the city as a porous boundary zone are connected to deeply-rooted stereotypes about the city as both open and welcoming as well as chaotic, ungovernable and dangerous. At this moment I would argue that these ideas relate particularly to the rumours that are passed around about Naples’ vast informal economy and southern Italy’s supposedly lax border controls. These both act as a draw for many migrants wanting to enter Europe from the global south, and as fuel for Northern European anxiety about urban disorder and the threat of invasion (Harney 2006, pp.376-9).

### The People: New Neapolitans and Old

Scholars interested in Naples have long been interested in understanding the city’s urban poor, or ‘popolino’. The earlier work that addresses this issue, such as Matilde Serao’s *Il Ventre di Napoli* (1994 and first published 1884) or Curzio Malaparte’s *La Pelle* (2010, and first published 1952), reflects 19<sup>th</sup> century European anxieties about the need to control the threat posed by urban poverty and criminality (Stallybrass and White 1986, pp.4-5). Later sociological work has largely grown out of Oscar Lewis’ ‘culture of poverty’ theory (1959) which posited the idea that the cultures of poor communities reproduce the mechanisms that perpetuate their own poverty. Naples has become an interesting case study to test out this theory because of its endemic poverty and because of the political and cultural processes that made Neapolitans into racialised others within the nation (see above). There are two important ethnographic studies that speak to and against this current of thought. Although they don’t address this directly,

both works rotate around particular forms of classed and racialised masculinity as being central to urban intersubjective dynamics:

Thomas Belmonte's *The Broken Fountain* (1979) examines the forms of culture and community emerging in a city suffering from deep-set economic decline, under-industrialisation and high unemployment rates. His thesis is that the 'compensatory' cultural practices performed by the popolino, such as that of the 'sly thief' who survives through a combination of cunning and willingness towards baseness, are the only option in an under-industrialised city, rife with unemployment, that doesn't allow "genuine" culture to emerge (1979, p.xxi). He explains that the strength of the popolino lies in their ability to mitigate extreme physical and moral suffering with semi-legal activities and a redemptive joking culture. However, they will never be able to organise politically because of their deep-seated respect for the slyness of bourgeois power (1979, pp.124-143). For him this impression of the popolino's radical alterity is first guided by their speech: 'If Italian, as I was learning it, seemed studied and clear and, in its crystalline grace, evocative of female beauty, Neapolitan struck me as primitive and flowing and masculine' (1979, p.5). It's not difficult to trace both the idea of the 'sly thief' – which is always gendered as masculine – and the idea of southern Italianness as primitive, masculine and erotic, back to the racialised history of Italian unification and the experience of colonialism described in the previous sections.

Italo Pardo's *Managing Existence in Naples: Morality, Action and Structure* (1996) explicitly writes against the grain of the Culture of Poverty idea and Belmonte's ideas about the Neapolitan sly thief. Unemployment figures in Naples are extremely high. Recent studies suggest that 65 per cent of 15-25 year olds are unemployed with 25 per cent being the average unemployment rate for 15-65 year olds (Harney 2006, p.378).

The informal or ‘slum economy’, by which capital from various sources (contraband, larceny, prostitution, street vending and the incomes of those who are stably employed) passes from hand to hand within the closed streets of the community allowing for everyone’s needs to be met, is thus vital for survival. This ability to hustle and get by, or ‘arrangiarsi’, is critical for gaining respect and self-respect in Naples and explains the logic of action behind what appears as deviant or destructive (Wacquant 1998, pp.1-4; Pardo 1996, p.11; Allum 1973, p.40). Pardo also notes that the slum economy is based on a rationale of achieving personal happiness and satisfaction, and not on the idea of getting funds to produce more capital, and so it is about moral, spiritual and symbolic as well as physical survival (1996, pp.170-1). He argues that historically the popolino have not been persuaded to practice any sort of organised socialism because Marxists have failed to understand their motivations and needs (Pardo 1996, p.180). However, over time, they negotiate the morality and terms of the market and civil society that constrain them and force them into subalternity in ways that are ambiguous, flexible and ultimately redefine their relationship of dependence and competition with the dominant members of society (Pardo 1996, pp.4, 16).

Alongside this work about class and urban life, another completely separate body of literature has emerged over the last two or three decades, predominantly in Italian sociology, that seeks to attend to the arrival of large numbers of migrants coming to Italy from the global south. This work makes use of census data, from various secular and religious national bodies<sup>6</sup>, to provide useful information about the arrival and

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<sup>6</sup> The religious organisation Caritas Italiana publishes, at regular intervals, a dossier mapping the arrival and settlement of migratory groups (Caritas 2011). The Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) is an independent, public body that, among other things, provides the official statistics relating to migration

dispersal of immigrants over the Italian territory (Amato 2006; 2008; Amato et al. 2009; Colombo and Sciortino 2003, 2004), and in particular regions and cities (De Filippo et al. 2005; Giovene 2004; Russo Krauss 2005). As Proglio explains, Italian scholarship came quite late to studying the effects of Italian colonialism and the ways in which it continues to effect the movement, treatment and settlement of migrants and Others in the peninsula (2013, p.323). Iain Chambers, Lidia Curti and Amalia Signorelli have all done seminal work on Naples, which positions everyday experiences of diversity as part of a mutable and multiple Mediterranean across history (Chambers 2008; Curti 2006, 2007; Signorelli 2006). Darkmatter journal recently published an issue about racism in Italy, and the articles by Curcio and Mellino, Sciurba, Mezzadra and Bonfiglioli both critique the way race and racism is dealt with in the academy in Italy and attempt to demonstrate alternative epistemological and ontological approaches (2010). A group of scholars also just published a roundtable discussion about Italian whiteness, race relations and the racialised stratification of the labour market in Italy, whose ideas and reflections have been used elsewhere in this thesis (Giuliani et al. 2013). Finally, recent empirical work on race, spatial practices and the lived experience of difference in particular parts of Naples has emerged from the work of the urban geographers D'Alessandro (2008), Dines (2002), Sarnelli (2003), and Schmoll (2003).

## Theorising Difference in Naples

### Belonging

Some of the literature on belonging provides useful insights for understanding the improvisational and unequal dynamics of transcultural encounters in the Neapolitan

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and foreign residency in the country (ISTAT 2013). Also, ISMU is a secular, independent organisation providing data on multiethnicity with a particular focus on international migration (ISMU 2014).

contact zone. Yuval-Davis explains that a ‘politics of belonging’ involves the drawing of boundaries between who can be included and excluded. Struggles around determining what is required of you in order for you to belong to a collectivity are often dialogical and rotate around contemporary political projects which have notions of citizenship, nationalism, cosmopolitanism and religion at their heart (Yuval-Davis 2011, pp.18-20, 43). Geschiere notes that essentialist claims about a “chthonic” belonging that is rooted in soil tend to manifest as primordial but are always undermined by a study of history, triggering anxiety about who authentically belongs and leading to an obsession with purification that cannot be satisfied (2009, pp.2-3, 13). This is important to consider in an age of globalised migration, where tensions between global flows of people and national controls feed ideas about “chthonic” belonging and lead to multiple forms of violence being perpetrated (2009, pp.21-2). Naples’ complex history, as a city with both a painful memory of being racialised within the nation and as the site of multiple pelagic intersubjective encounters, complicates both these narratives about belonging. It is both part of the EU, and so implicated within its anti-immigration politics, and aware of its inferior positionality on the southern edge of Europe. As Chambers notes, the Neapolitan and the migrant in Naples are united by a shared history of subordination and movement (2008, p.127). This can generate a greater openness to and welcoming of the Other, as many claim is the case, as much as a proteophobic fear and rejection of their unsettling and indefinable familiarity (Bauman 1993, pp.164-5).

### Hegemonic Masculinities

I found that articulations of belonging or exclusion in my field sites were inextricably linked to the performance of particular kinds of Neapolitan masculinity. The relationship between southern Italian masculinity and the state has partly excluded them from full participation as national citizens. As a result, well-defined, locally hegemonic

forms of masculinity have come about from the city's history of subjugation within the nation (Connel and Messerschmidt 2005, p.842). Some examples of these different types of local masculinity, as described over the previous sections, are that of the brutal and passionate southern male, the virile 'pater familias' of the fascist imagination, the Neapolitan sly thief, the commedia dell'arte joker, and the dockside gangster. The history of their formation has been explored and highlighted because I have found them to be salient to an understanding of pavement interactions in Naples and, particularly, the gendered forms of talk that create meanings about difference, belonging and interaction in daily life there. Masculine talk both bolsters consensual forms of masculine hegemony, and also creates the possibility of enforcing differential power dynamics through force. This is reminiscent of the ethnically-marked and masculine languages that Hewitt (1986) and Kissling (1991) explore in their own work (see above). Also Ayim (1997) has written about racist and sexist forms of language that act to dominate and silence women and ethnic minorities. In these manifestations of talk, women continue to figure as, 'a constitutive moment in the racialised desire for economic and political control' (Brah 1996, p.154). Migrant men can also be subjected to sexualised forms of policing on the part of Neapolitan men. As González-López' research about the sexual vulnerability of migrant Mexicans in America shows, not all heterosexual individuals or groups are privileged. Having previously occupied hegemonic masculine positionalities in their country of origin, migrant men can find themselves locked within 'intra-male hierarchical interactions' where they are the subject of sexual harassment and policing (2006, p.68). The treatment of migrant men in Naples is also evocative of the stereotypes about black masculinity that were constructed during colonialism and arrived in Italy via American films to be then re-elaborated today in response to migration flows and the political ethos of Fortress

Europe (Giuliani 2013, p.262). This is revelatory of the ways in which local hegemonic masculinities exist within a plurality and hierarchy of masculinities, where agency, oppression and complicity with oppression coexist ambiguously together (Connel and Messerschmidt 2005, pp.845-7).

## The Urban

The literature on race, nation and migration described in the last part of the chapter points towards particular spaces of urban encounter that inform interaction between the ‘popolino’ (the Neapolitan urban poor) and new arrivals in Naples. Many migrants work alongside unemployed and underemployed Neapolitans in the vast informal sector that keeps the city afloat; although they do take the most marginalised positions and the greater risks within that economy (Amato et al. 2009, pp.101-2). The great degree of economic co-dependence between the popolino and the migrant Other necessitates further enquires about the city’s informal economy and how organised crime groups (and in particular some clans that form part of the Neapolitan Camorra or Mafia) and the state are able to intervene on people’s life chances through it. As such the informal economy is an important lens through which to think about articulations of difference in Naples at this time. In the following part of the chapter I home in on the particular aspect of the informal economy that has interested me in this project: street markets and their relationship to local, national and international formations of power. In order to understand the Neapolitan street market as both a typical and specific site of daily conviviality and conflict, it is necessary to unpick the ways in which market traders are both enabled and constrained by the work they do. In order to do this I consider some of the scholarly work that helps me think about the politics of street markets. I start by highlighting useful ways in which to think about the unique forms of transcultural

collaboration and solidarity that are emerging in Neapolitan street markets at this time through Bakhtin's take on the market (1984), ethnographic work on the informal organisation of street markets, Hall et al's work on mugging and worklessness (1978), Mitchell's work on Right to the City (2003), and Gramsci's writings about the national-popular (2010). I conclude by exploring ways in which to think about the forms of gendered power and domination that are working to divide and exclude people from within and without of street markets in Naples (Bauman 2004; Mbembe 2001, 2003; Pateman 1988; Rubin 1975).

## Neapolitan Street Markets

The Neapolitan informal or slum economy is constituted by a great number of legal, semi-legal and illegal activities that organise the labour of unemployed or underemployed Neapolitans and migrants as part of an organised, hierarchical stratification. In different sectors this can work in a number of different ways. To look briefly at an aspect of the retail market, for example, non-labelled clothing is imported by the Chinese into the Port, labels are sewn on by Italians in the urban outskirts and then the newly-branded items are sold by Senegalese and Bangladeshi men in the historic centre (Dines 2002, p.178; Schmoll 2003, p.6). Participation in the slum economy has always been viewed in Naples, with pride, as an 'arte di arrangiarsi' (an art of getting by) that mitigates mass unemployment and urban deprivation (Allum 1973, p.40; Pardo 1996, p.11). The contribution that migrants make to the slum economy is also frequently described approvingly by Neapolitans as them also knowing how to 'arrangiare' (Dines 2002, p.178). Although getting by obviously speaks of last resorts and people who have fallen on hard times, the pride inherent in the term 'l'arte

di arrangiarsi' shows how the informal economy generates important sites for the exercise of agency and self-respect.

Street markets play a key role in the informal economy and are important locations in which to observe the improvisational and ambiguous interplay between inclusion and exclusion in Naples. In her work on geographies of commerce in Naples, D'Alessandro identifies street vending – with permits or without – as a much-maligned, understudied and marginalised aspect of a retail sector that blurs the boundaries between formal and informal means of making money at every level (2008, p.184, 257). Not only is it an important way in which Neapolitans mitigate unemployment and poverty, it also provides economic openings for new social actors, in particular Senegalese, North African, Chinese and South Asian migrants, both documented and undocumented (2008, pp.152-53, 258). Many street vendors sell contraband bags or CDs which are themselves made in factories in the city (D'Alessandro 2008, p.258). Others sell products manufactured in China which they buy directly from Chinese wholesalers.

However, street vending is felt by many to be a serious social menace and, needless to say, it is the migrant street vendors who are usually positioned as being the biggest problem (D'Alessandro 2008, p.252). Political responses to street vending are a reaction to populist pressure from those who feel threatened by the visible presence of migrant men making their living off the Neapolitan pavement. Unlicensed stalls, particularly if they are run by migrant vendors, are regularly subjected to municipal crackdowns and aggressive police evictions. Migrants who are caught selling contraband items will also get a criminal record which denies them the chance of ever finding legal work and getting a visa under articles 380 and 381 of the Bossi Fini immigration law (Normativa 2014). The split labour market created by these laws forces migrants into a grey zone

where their labour can be extracted illegally by the mafias and other actors in the submerged economy (Venturini 2013). Migrants end up working in particular niches – such as Senegalese men who often sell contraband bags – which have been designated to them by people making decisions based on race and language (Grappi and Sacchetto 2013, p.318). Those migrant men, who are essentially obliged to sell fake items if they want to work, end up taking the most risks, and paying the highest price, in the contraband trade, as they are out on the streets and in clear view of police raids. So, while street markets open up the possibility of survival and dignity, they are also sites of further marginalisation and domination.

### The Impact of Power Structures on Street Vending

The slum economy exists because of the formal (state policy and bureaucracy) and the informal (organised criminality) systems of power that sustain it (Pardo 1996, p.11). It is important not to under-estimate the impact the relationships between the Italian state and Camorra have on the conduct of daily life in the city, particularly since WWII. In the absence of state will to fix Naples' economic problems, 'the economic and political security of the street, its management and "policing," fell into the hands of those willing to use the violence required to create an "order" amenable to their family and clan interests' (Chambers 2008, p.98). D'Alessandro argues that the increasing state deregulation of commercial activities over recent decades has made space for organised crime to take even greater control of the local economy, particularly in light of endemic unemployment and desperation for work (2008, p.183). The Camorra has shown itself to be flexible and reactive in its pursuit of profit, intervening in everything from the circulation of goods to the spaces of sale as well as continuing the tradition of demanding protection money (2008, pp.184, 229). It is present at every layer of

commerce, extracting protection money from producers and vendors as well as intervening in the process of manufacture itself (2008, pp.260-61). They both act *upon* it parasitically, through practices of extortion, usury or robbery, as well as *within* commerce, by investing directly in the production and distribution of merchandise. This second aspect concerns the market of both Made in Italy products as well as contraband, like the Louis Vuitton bags that many Senegalese street vendors sell. The lines between legality and illegality are especially blurred within this practice, to the point that no legal judgment has ever been made that connects the activities of the Camorra to the commercial practices involving either Made in Italy or contraband items (D'Alessandro 2009). The President of the Anti-Racket Association has gone so far as to say that the success of Neapolitan commerce should be put down more to the investment the Camorra have made in the sector than to any of the state reforms (D'Alessandro 2008, pp.228-29).

The birth of Italian mafia and the birth of the Italian nation state are intimately linked. Gramsci puts this down to the overarching individualism of the modern state which used organised criminal links to cement the new social contract between the rich and the poor (2010, p.60). At the onset of the Cold War, mafia power was used in a similar way by the Allied Forces to suppress the threat posed by Communism in Naples. The insertion of Camorra representatives into public office has left a trace on the civil and political landscape which has never been fully eradicated in the city (Chambers 2008, pp.99-103). What Arlacchi calls the contemporary entrepreneurial mafia started to come about with the birth of the heroin trade in the 1970s. This coincided with mass Italian emigration trickling off and Italy becoming a place of net immigration. What had previously been a situation of labour lack for the Italian mafias has now become a situation of labour surplus (Arlacchi 1986, p.83). Their pursuit of capital accumulation

combines in a deadly manner with the monopoly they hold over the use of violence in business practices. The threat that this poses to democratic processes in Italy is not to be underestimated (1986, pp.87-9). The loss of the state's territorial monopoly of power and the Camorra's increasing capacity to wield political and economic power is one of the key things that animates the Relation between the popolino and migrants in Naples.

### Theorising Street Markets

The activities going on in Neapolitan street markets raise interesting questions about how to define the margin and the periphery and how to understand different processes of change. This positions markets as a privileged site of reckoning between interlinked hierarchies of high and low, as well as the power differentials that construct the body, geographical space and social formations (Stallybrass and White 1986, p.2). Over the following section I will discuss some of the literature I have used to think about the episodes of, often ambivalent and fraught, collaboration, solidarity and resistance that I witnessed in Neapolitan markets; followed by work that helps to explain rejection, exclusion and violence amongst street vendors.

### Solidarity in Street Markets

Bakhtin particularly identifies the 'culture of the marketplace' as a site where an ambivalent but anti-hierarchical 'familiar speech' continues to offer alternative cultural possibilities (1984, pp.7-9, 14-17). While the carnivalesque marketplace can re-code relations of dominance and subordination across the whole social structure, it fails to completely do away with power and often functions in complicity with it, participating in the abuse of those who are more vulnerable (Stallybrass and White 1986, p.19).

Other theoretical work on markets echoes Bakhtin, though using different language. Aboulafia asks us to recognise the embeddedness of markets in social relations and systems of ‘norms, rules and cognitive scripts’ (Aboulafia 1998, p.69). This focus on ‘markets as cultures’, areas of repeated interaction where the performance of particular scripts allows ongoing competition over power interests, helps us to get over the myth of their being areas of ‘frictionless transaction’ (1998, pp.69-70). The rationality governing these ‘identity tools’ are not a ‘cultural universal’ but are developed over time in particular contexts and communities (1998, pp.72-4). Market rules are not the reflection of the market but of particular social arrangements to do with power, status and historical contingency (1998, p.84).

Ethnographic work on market practices across the world testifies to this idea of unstable friction by focusing on the interaction between the formal and the informal (Roitman 1990, p.676; Elyachar 2005, p.23; Stoller 1996). Roitman, in her work on markets in West Africa, identifies a process of ‘straddling’ whereby agents are implicated in production processes both in the informal, clientelist, or black market and also in the state market (1990, p.678). Elyachar states, in her work about market practices in Cairo, that it is impossible to think of the ‘informal’ without also telling a parallel story about the state (2005, p.73). The cultural and social practices of the poor are incorporated into the market and then linked to other processes occurring across the world (2005, p.5). Stoller’s work, which tells the story of the unregulated African Market on 125<sup>th</sup> street in Harlem in the 1990s, shows that what appeared informal and chaotic to the outsider was actually the result of ancient trans-national trade networks (1996, pp.776-8). In fact, in my own fieldwork I was moved to discover that Senegalese vendors who had previously had a pitch on 125<sup>th</sup> street, were now in Naples at Via Bologna market. In his work, Stoller explains that the space of the market became a site of ‘multiple contestation and

struggle' where, as a result of migration, new forms of solidarity emerged and crashed against international systems of power and pre-existing 'spatial orders' (1996, p.785).

The situation in Naples is one of historically-produced worklessness and wagelessness. Street vending provides earnings for people in a situation where they are either very unlikely to ever be employed or are unable to easily find legal work because of their visa status. Hall et al. (1978) propose semi-legal and illegal earning activities as a dignified and pragmatic quasi-political reaction to racialised oppression and lack of work. Things like unregulated street vending and the sale of contraband may be illegal, but they are a vital element of highly organised and structured slum economies that feed and shelter whole communities both near to and far from where they take place (Hall et al. 1978, pp.327-397). Urban anthropological work by scholars like Gregory (1998), Hartigan (1999), Anderson (1999, 2002), Bourgois (1995), Bourgois and Schonberg (2009), Duneier (1999, 2002 and 2004), Newman (1999, 2002) and Wacquant (1998, 2002, 2008a and 2008b) speaks to idea of every day survival as political in that it calls for a greater focus on the local, as a 'power-laden field of social relations' where interpretations and boundaries are subject to a constant re-interpretation as people construct meaningful lives for themselves (Gregory 1998, p.11; Hartigan 1999, p.4).

Mitchell's work on the Right to the City is useful for understanding the spatialisation of political struggles, between street vendors and the state, that are generated by the survival strategies going on in street markets. He argues that the production of particular kinds of space according to the logics of capital make it impossible for other sorts of people who need that space to survive. Thus, struggles over the use of space become the frontline of the battle for the Right to the City (Mitchell 2003, p.167). The use-value of the pavements where street vendors make their living threatens the exchange-value

envisioned by the state, who wish to encourage economic health in Naples through its insertion into the global capitalist economy, not the local slum economy. Thus the forms of accumulation practised by the poor on market stalls needed to be regulated through discourses of their deviance and disorder (Mitchell 2003, pp.177-8). The making of new spatial and cultural reconfigurations between street vendors – that cross racialised boundaries and work horizontally despite a national and international austerity and anti-immigration politics – show the ways in which spaces in the city can be won and protected through active and on-going struggle (Mitchell 2003, pp.3-6).

Finally, Gramsci provides a number of useful ways of thinking about the forms of transcultural collaboration and solidarity that emerge in Neapolitan street markets. For Gramsci the solution to the damage caused by the Southern Question lay in a struggle between the subaltern and hegemony. He envisaged this taking place through cosmopolitan collaboration between the southern peasantry and the northern industrialised proletariat. This would mean overcoming the animosity that had been created between the two groups to bring about a ‘national-popular’ capable of bringing about social change (Gramsci 2010, pp.54, 118, 141; Chambers 2008, p.8). Hall explains that for Gramsci, struggle is historically-shaped through the ‘articulation and dis-articulation of ideas’ (1986, p.434). Cultural meaning is produced in negotiation and discourse along economic, political, and ideological lines as part of a collective articulation (1986, pp.417-21, 433). As such his ideas can be applied to the processes at work in a particular place and time. Verdicchio suggests that Gramsci’s idea of alliance could be applied to the indigenous and emerging subalterns in contemporary Italy as a result of globalised markets and globalised movements of people (1997, p.162). As Said points out, the ‘territorial, spatial, and geographical foundations of social life’ were key to Gramsci’s thought (1993, p.57). It may also be possible to talk about the

emergence of a local-popular in Naples as a result of the particular solidarities generated through its history of multilingual Relation.

### Conflict in Street Markets

Key also to a conceptualisation of resistant strategies in Neapolitan street markets is an understanding of the ways in which forms of sexual and racialised violence *amongst* street vendors are connected to the general struggle against state oppression. It is the same people who are involved in, for example, both organising a collective protest when a market gets shut down, and threatening a Senegalese colleague with rape as a punishment for supposed misbehavior; and it is important to find a way to deal with such complexity.

As I have already stated, these power struggles are historically and contextually situated. The ‘coordinated choreography’ of men’s and women’s movements through squares, streets, churches, backstreets and local shops in order to avoid inappropriate interactions with each other has always been an important feature of daily life in Mediterranean societies (Harding 1975; Reiter 1975, p.257; Silverman 1975). This literature, as already mentioned, states that humorous language is a key tool for maintaining sexual preserves in public spaces (Harding 1975; Reiter 1975). Gilmore has argued that the fierce protectiveness of masculine honour, and attendant policing of feminine shame, has always been a displacement for tensions about economic stagnation and disrespect of the south, that might otherwise have erupted into open hostilities (1982, p.191).

In Naples, the particular configurations of male power and leadership that developed between Italian unification and the end of WW2 have created a local context of sexuality – a set of sexual conventions, practices and systems – that has given rise to

and, to a certain extent, continues to perpetuate a hegemonic ‘sex/gender system’ (Rubin 1975). This ‘political economy of sexual systems’ is interdependent with the relations of production that produce the politics and economics of social life in the city. Streets and squares in Naples have historically been incredibly male and, until about three decades ago, predominantly Neapolitan spaces. Street markets are thus sites of differential power games not only because of the consensual and non-consensual performances of different sorts of hegemonic Neapolitan masculinity, as explored above, and the attendant struggles over entitlement and positionality that take place between Neapolitan men and male migrant vendors; but also because of the arrival of women in street markets, the breaking of historic social taboos that ensue from that and, above all, the threat to social order represented by interracial interactions. Pateman’s notion of the ‘sexual contract’ (1988) and Rubin’s ‘sex-gender system’ (1975) are both useful for theorising this in that they posit that, under these systems, women are objects of exchange between men mean and should be incorporated as sexual objects into civil society within the private sphere only (Pateman 1988, p.11; Rubin 1975, p.177). Furthermore, Pateman points out that the sexual contract is connected to two other fraternal pacts – the social contract and the slave contract – which have worked together to establish the authority of particular forms of white masculinity in the modern world (1988, pp.77, 281). As such interracial desire is prohibited and white women are objects of sexual exchange between white male exchangers. The presence of women and male Others in street markets is aggressively policed by Neapolitan men through masculine forms of talk that enforce forms of community separation. Some of this is consensual, in that people consent to the heteronormative hegemonic social order; and some of this is non-consensual and simply about domination and force.

The gendered forms of subjugation, that are part of the intersubjective dynamics of the pavement, need to be understood within the context of radical precariousness, joblessness and tragedy that street vendors function within. Modernity has left many people without the ability to support themselves. Those people become human waste: no longer unemployed but, instead, permanently redundant and so excess to need and disposable (Bauman 2004). This, as Mbembe (2003) explains, reveals how death has structured the idea of sovereignty, politics and the subject from modernity onwards: ‘sovereignty means the capacity to decide who matters and who does not, who is *disposable* and who is not’ (2003, p.27). In a city where official unemployment rates are three times higher than the rest of the country at a little over 25 percent (ISTAT 2013), and there is only a partial welfare structure, the frequently malicious and humorous-yet-violent transcultural interactions of the pavement need to also be understood as a way in which men subordinated men respond to extreme economic marginalisation and seek to offset tragedy and oppression. Of course sexual violence exists at every level of society. However, in these conditions, the local economy of sexuality is a way in which these people derive power from subjugating the most vulnerable members of society through the performance of differential hegemonic masculinities, as discussed above (Mbembe 2001, p.13). These processes of brutalisation are part of the urgency and terror through which people are forced to confront the value of their own existence and possible death (2001, p.15).

## Chapter Three: Managing the Multilingual in the Field

In this chapter I describe the methodological approach I have used to pay attention to the ways that talk relates to broader questions of multilingual intersubjective communication and cultural meaning-making in Neapolitan markets. I start by explaining how participant observation and photographic methods allowed me to explore dialogical articulations of cultural meaning making about difference, positionality and belonging in the field. This includes a description of the different ways I have engaged with questions of talk and language use over the course of the project. Following that I describe the process of meeting gatekeepers and gaining access to Neapolitan street markets at a particularly difficult moment in Naples' history. I reflect on how my positionality – as a blonde white woman, as a person of mixed Italian-English heritage, as a southern Italian person from a village and not the city of Naples itself, as a nascent ethnographer and committed anti-racist – channelled the people I met and the kind of project I ended up doing. I then introduce the main field sites and the principle protagonists in the research. This allows me to reflect further upon the histories of those market spaces, the people who work there and the complex, ambiguous ways that I and my research participants were coded in particular contexts. Languages and language use populate the different contextual layers unpacked below, connecting the cultural and linguistic tensions following Unification to today's globalised and multilingual reality. A multilingual babel is the soundscape of everyday life as you move around Naples, infusing transcultural interactions in particular ways in particular spaces. The way people speak and how they speak to each other maps onto multiple and overlapping cultural histories and geographies, and there are painful issues

at stake in acknowledging the Other by acknowledging their linguistic subjectivity. This reveals the enactment of racialised conviviality and conflict in the city today.

## Methods in Practice

Whilst ethnographic methods can never claim to know and represent the whole truth, they are still an extremely useful tool for understanding how race and racism enter into people's lives in everyday, banal circumstances as long as they maintain a 'contingent and modest epistemology' that seeks to combine reporting with a reflexive consciousness at all times (Back 1996, p.5). The kinds of intimacy involved in doing fieldwork, and the fact that the researcher has ultimate control over the production of the final text, means that questions of unequal power and knowledge production can never be totally overcome. However, a messy, interpretative and experimental approach, which uses different methodologies and involves research participants in the collection of data, allows the ethnographer to combat the excesses wrought by bias, partiality, objectification and subjectivity (Ali 2006, pp.474-8). Scheper-Hughes says that an ethnographer is a cultural interpreter who strives to do the best they can with the limited resources available, and despite their inevitable flaws. She calls for a 'good enough' ethnography that tries to 'speak truth to power' when nothing else can (1992, p.28).

## Participant Observation

Participant observation was the principal method I used during fieldwork. I tried to merge into the environment of the market, participate in the daily activities of the stall and observe what happened. I also occasionally steered the conversation towards the issues about talk and race that were of particular interest to me. I often broke the ice with new informants by asking them what their favourite swear words were. This produced interesting results. On one occasion, early on in the fieldwork, I was taken to a

Burkinabé restaurant by a friend in the antiracist scene. One Burkinabé man told me his favourite swear word was ‘*che sfaccima e’ burdell*’ (in Neapolitan, *sfaccima* means semen and *burdell* means brothel or chaos). He had picked this term up in a side job as a nightclub DJ. Another responded that he hurled the insult ‘*va a fa mmoc a chi t’è muort*’ (in Neapolitan: go and ejaculate into the mouth of your dead ancestors), to much hilarity, at Neapolitans working next to him in the fields. This led into a longer discussion about the ways in which the Neapolitan language had changed to become both more vicious and yet also playful. Expressions that, in the past, would have led to violence, were now being employed humorously and tactically in transcultural interactions in order to make claims for belonging and acceptance. These extended conversations enabled me to get to know the biographies of my main research participants and helped them to understand what I was interested in finding out. They also provided opportunities for them to tell me what they thought was important about race relations in Naples, and I was often told, ‘put this in your book’ or, on one occasion, ‘what you really need to understand is what’s going on with migrants and the oranges’<sup>7</sup>. It was useful to compare the comments they made during these discussions with the events and interactions that happened spontaneously in the field. I then used these chats to go back and ask for clarifications and further reflections on things they had said or particular events that had taken place. I also paid attention to the sensuous dimension of social relationships in the field, such as the smell of different food being sold and eaten in the market, the sound of music from stalls and the feel of cold air, rain and, then, soaring temperatures across the seasons (Back 2009).

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<sup>7</sup> This person, a political refugee from Burkina Faso, was referring to the awful living conditions of African fruit pickers in Puglia and Calabria, and the 2010 race riots in Rosarno, Calabria.

On one of the first days of doing fieldwork at Via Bologna I was stopped by a young Senegalese man as I walked down the market clutching a notebook. He made a jokey show of rushing at me and shouted, ‘put that away! I’m a *guappo*!’ *Guappo* means gangster in Neapolitan. He was warning me that I looked too officious with the notepad and would make everyone in the market uncomfortable and suspicious. After that, I wrote up fieldwork notes immediately after leaving the field to avoid forgetting the detail of what had happened. If something really important happened that I needed to remember exactly, I wrote notes quickly on receipts and scraps of paper from my bag. All records were kept in chronological order and organised according to emerging themes on NVIVO, a qualitative software programme. I also used audio recording, as I got to know my research participants better and they came to trust me more, because my interest in language meant I wanted to pay attention to the exact wording of what was said in order to quote precisely in the finished work. However I found that markets, and particularly markets and pitches on the side of busy roads, are not good places to make audio recordings. I made a number of long recordings in the first three months of the fieldwork but the sound quality was so bad that, as time went on, I took to relying more on my memory and writing notes as soon as I could. I was also not given consent to record at all of my sites so in that case also had to rely on my recollection of the interactions that took place.

Towards the end of the fieldwork I let those who were interested in doing so read all the notes I had made whilst with them. I deliberately made the notes in Italian so they could read them if they wanted to. This provided them with an opportunity to correct things they thought I had missed or misunderstood and take back anything they had said or done that they were uncomfortable with me writing up. I should note, however, that only those born in Italy accepted my offer with my other research participants telling me

they trusted me or intimating that they found it difficult to read large amounts of text. Wu read the notes I made whilst working with Ku on his behalf. With everyone else I decided to discuss the general content of my field works, emphasising anything I considered particularly important or sensitive. My attempts to put in place more contested and collective processes of knowledge production was imperfect but it was the only realistic compromise I could come to in the circumstances.

The approach to generating collective forms of knowledge production extends into my narration of events in the following chapters through the use of textual devices such as transcripts of recordings, extended quotation, description and monologues (Back 1996, p.6). Events are always being reconstructed and this helps to maintain a focus on the multiple voices within the research process, including that of the researcher, as author and ethnographer in the field, and that of the reader. I will offer my reflection on events but the aim is also to provide enough material so that other interpretations are also possible (1996, p.26).

### Translating the Field

Different forms of language difference and processes of translation, interpretation and representation are a fundamental part of academic knowledge production (Do Mar Pereira et al. 2009, pp.1-2; Temple 2004). The implications of this are particularly significant in a piece of research that is about talk and its relationship to dialogical forms of transcultural meaning-making. An ethnography of speaking has to attend to language difference both as a conceptual and as an ethical or political question (Do Mar Pereira et al. 2009, p.4; Temple 2004, p.2). The dynamics of this hold weight throughout the research process, both whilst in the field and once the task of data analysis and interpretation start.

One aspect of this is to do with the multilingual hyperdiversity of the field and its attendant array of different linguistic registers. I speak English, Italian, Neapolitan and French fluently. I also came to recognise and interact at a basic level in many other languages whilst I was in the field. I wrote my field notes in a combination of languages, mainly Italian and English, and I was writing and thinking about the research in more than one language right from the beginning of the process. In practice I cannot claim that I understood everything that was said during fieldwork, as so many different languages were being spoken. In cases where I was unsure about something I asked those around me to interpret and I checked the accuracy of data I had gathered by showing transcriptions and field notes to my field participants.

In the process of writing this thesis I have translated the dialogues and notes I recorded into English. In recognition of the fact that issues around representation and language are fundamental to the spirit of the project, I have not sought to hide the nuts and bolts of this process in the following chapters. Dialogue is coded in the text to give an idea of the different languages being spoken: anything that was said in Neapolitan is in italics, anything said in Italian is in normal type and anything that has been transcribed directly without being translated is underlined. All extra descriptions of the scene have been put in bold (Please refer to Appendix 3 for a full explanation of these translation terms). I have also integrated this into my interpretation of the different kinds of meaning-making at play in Naples. I have tried to render a sense of the multilingual chatter of the field in my translation in a way that is sensitive to the ‘political context and connotations of words’ and how these shape intersubjective relations and their attendant power dynamics (Do Mar Pereira et al. 2009, p.9). Sometimes this was quite difficult. For example, in Chapter Four I talk about the earning activities of a group of men who Neapolitans call ‘*pacchisti*’. They are essentially scammers who trick passers-by into

buying a smart phone and then send them away with an empty package. This scam is called '*fare il pacco*' or 'making packages'. In this case, as with others, I decided not to translate the term at all but explain what they do and how it forms part of the local cultural context around the Ferrovia. I also decided not to translate the word 'negro' which is often used to insult or describe black men. Attitudes about black men in Italy have been shaped significantly by US mass culture (Giuliani 2013, p.262), but the word 'negro' exists within a different race relations context to that of the US, and I wanted to preserve the weight of its use in the street in Naples. In general I have avoided translating into Standard English and tried to produce a translation that 'foreignises' the text, bringing the reader to Naples to some extent (Temple 2004, p.4). Inevitably things get lost in translation, despite the reflexive and collaborative approach I have used. But things are also found as a result of my particular positionality in the field and the critical reflection undertaken regarding multiple and nuanced questions of language difference and transcultural communication (Do Mar Pereira et al. 2009, pp.4-5).

Another important aspect of language difference and representation relates to the mutual embeddedness of conceptual and methodological approaches in the project. This particularly speaks to the interpretative process I have undertaken. There is no such thing as an objective 'knowledge claim' and, like all researchers, I have presented accounts from my own position in the social world (Temple 2004, p.3). I paid attention to the ways that particular types of talk and patterns of communication, like swearing, greetings, rumour and switching between languages, mediated the ways that people constructed meanings about race and racism in Neapolitan marketplaces in my data. This was based on my experiences in the field as well as my readings of other work examining the way talk relates to broader questions of cultural meaning-making, outlined in the previous chapter. I analysed this 'dialogically', paying close attention to

how language use amongst my research participants produced meaning through interaction and negotiation. This required a close reading of the context, social setting and circumstances of the interaction, also taking into account my own presence there (Riessman 2008, p.105). Over the course of collecting, organising and going through the data, I began to define a series of speech genres, or conventions of speaking, through which ideas about difference, belonging and positionality were being worked out in Neapolitan street markets. These genres were constituted by the particularities of the time and place of the research as well as local taxonomies of communication and their performative characteristics (Finnegan 1992, pp.142-145). They were not fixed conventions but dialogical forms of speaking that were spread and re-negotiated through repeated iteration (Ries 1997, p.34). These patterns of communication, and their relationship to a wider terrain of economic and political struggle, began to tell a story about the bigger issues at stake in the enactment of a daily multilingual Relation in Naples' markets.

### Photographic Methods

In this project I have also used photography as a supporting method to help me better capture the multiple, complex and improvisational dynamics of interaction between people in Naples and how this works to generate new forms of solidarity and conflict (Back 2009, p.12). This worked in two different ways. Firstly, where I had consent to do so, I took documentary photos of the everyday experience and practices at my sites, as well as at protests and the particular events which marked the time I was there. Informed consent was sought in all cases as part of an ongoing process that emphasised the future publication of the images, as it is impossible to protect anonymity in a photograph (Pink 2001, p.44). Some of my participants allowed me to take photographs

of them, but the majority didn't for a number of very good reasons. However all of them, except for Comfort at Via Bologna, were very happy for me to photograph their stalls and insisted on re-arranging their wares attractively before I could photograph. I then showed these photos to my research participants to trigger further exchanges and reflections. Secondly I gave disposable cameras to three of my research participants and asked them to take photos of the things that really symbolised 'Naples today' for them. The results were also used to prompt reflection and further discussion. Most of my research participants declined to participate in the exercise because of the precariousness of their work and personal situations and/or the already taxing physical and mental labour involved in keeping a market stall. Those who did participate found the exercise challenging partly because they were anxious to provide me with something I would find useful and partly because of the photographic culture most familiar to them which argued that photos should be taken on special occasions and at dramatic events (Pink 2001, p.32).

Given the urgent nature of social conflict around race in Naples, photographic methods helped to lend immediacy and understanding about the people participating in the research (Back and Duneier 2006, p.554). It helped me to foster greater collaboration between the research and my research participants thus allowing me to investigate my politics and intent as a researcher as well as the multiple interpretations that can be made by the audience as they draw on a range of common-sense opinions about difference and belonging (Ali 2004, p.274; Pink 2001, p.11). It also became part of the research context itself and affected how I was positioned and regarded in ways that were gendered, racialised and classed (Pink 2001, p.36). Beyond simply documenting the exchanges between people, these photos have helped me reflect beyond the orality of the research process and provided further notes on different configurations of the self by

showing the performance of people and bodies in the market environment (Back 2009).

Photography does not allow me to pay attention to talk in the way that participant observation does. However it is a ‘materialised manipulation’ of the ‘cognitive processes involved in seeing’, useful for drawing out the relationship between seeing and race. This relationship is fluid and mobile, so photography contributes to a dialogic analysis of improvisational and ambiguous articulations of belonging in the contact zone (Knowles 2006, pp.512). Images and narratives work together to ‘stabilise meaning... to disrupt, to support or reconfigure existing ways of thinking about and seeing the world’ (2006, pp.515-516).

Like the audio recorder and the written word, photography has historically been a conduit for power and surveillance so it is problematic to let it stand on its own (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009, p.14). Images will be incorporated to the project only when it is appropriate and elucidating to do so and linked to ‘contextual and theoretical analysis’ in order to avoid leaving the images prey to exoticising and simplistic misappropriation and misinterpretation (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009, p.11; Pink 2001, p.5). I will also place the photographs in sequences around the written word in careful juxtaposition, as a way of writing ‘*with* images and not *about* images’ (Knowles 2006, p.518). Photographic images do more or less work in this project depending on the extent to which I have decided to integrate them into the analysis. At times they are merely illustrative, and draw the reader’s attention to important and dramatic events that happened in the field; at other times they are integral to my understanding of particular market exchanges and positionalities; and some photos are repeated at different points in the ethnography because they allow a different angle to emerge from the analysis.

## Negotiating Access

I conducted my ethnography in a number of different street markets and individual pitches that were located in and around the main arteries feeding off the main train station in Naples, Piazza Garibaldi. This area, sometimes known as ‘La Ferrovia’ (The Railway), occupies a particular symbolic importance in the popular imaginary. It is a nodal transport point, with connections by underground, train, and bus spreading out across the city, through the rest of the region, the country and internationally. It also witnesses the city’s most intense economic activity, in the form of markets, stock warehouses and hotels, and the goods and services produced there circulate through both formal and informal economic networks. These characteristics have been transformed dramatically because of intensified migration and settlement over the last two decades and as a result of the various escalating battles between organised criminality and the state over control of the area. As described in the last chapter, a particular sort of informal street economy operates in these areas that allows for greater economic autonomy, self-reliance and horizontal interaction between ‘indigenous’ Neapolitans and those newer to the city (D’Alessandro 2008; Dines 2002; Rea 2006, pp.6-9; Schmoll 2003, pp.306). While my fieldwork mainly took place at these market sites, I also ended up making notes on things that I witnessed and took part in during marches and protests, community events, and as I went about my regular life in the city, doing my shopping, hanging out with friends and travelling by train down the coast to Vico Equense, where my extended family live. The kinds of vivacious and open sociability that take place on public transport in Naples made bus and train journeys particularly interesting places to observe everyday interactions in the city. That, coupled with the fact that many street vendors use public transport to transport their merchandise – and create stress when occupying space with large bags during peak times – offered

rich opportunities to observe the fraught and convivial transcultural interactions that extended out across the city from the street markets I was working on.

I started the process of exploring ways of entering the field and identifying gatekeepers in February 2010, about six months prior to starting the PhD programme. Initially I spoke to a number of members of the Social Science faculty at the Orientale University in Naples about my project idea. They put me in touch with other student researchers who had experience of conducting empirical research in Naples and were active in the city's antiracist scene. Through them I also met people working full time as grassroots activists and as cultural mediators on behalf of the various ethnic minority and disenfranchised communities living in the city. These people took me on tours round the city centre of Naples and introduced me to the activist groups operating out of intercultural community centres, like the occupied S.K.A. building and the Centro Nanà. These spaces, and others like them, organise intercultural events, provide support on visa applications and language learning, and mobilise politically for the rights of migrants (see S.K.A. 2013; Dedalus 2013). Over the course of a series of trips to Naples from London from the middle of 2010 to late 2011 I attended political meetings and public events, and assisted in a few Italian lessons. This commitment continued once I entered the field full-time in December 2011. I attended weekly meetings of the Antiracist Forum, a body set up to share knowledge and resources about the various struggles people were facing in the region. I also decided to organise my own English and literacy classes at the Zayd Ibn Thabit mosque in Piazza Mercato. I set this up through a Somali woman I had met on the basis that many members of Naples' Somali community have been established in the city for a long time and often visit their relatives in the UK. My tentative first approaches eventually led me to the street markets and pitches that were to become my main sites, and the traders that were to

become my main research participants. The negotiation of access was a gradual process that became clearer as I encountered more people and situations and better understood what I wanted to do. Initially I was very interested in exploring the migrant language schools and the nightclub scene in central Naples. Over time I realised that I was interested in market sites because it is there more than anywhere else that horizontal and spontaneous interaction can take place across racialised boundaries despite and because of a wider context of race and racialisation (Back 2003, pp.313-4).

Seeking access through the antiracist scene was not without its challenges. As Back states, antiracism still tends to understand racism as a highly centralised and moral phenomena and refuses to pay attention to the complex ways that racist and antiracist feeling work together in multiple and complex ways in people's everyday lives (1996, pp.2-3). It was difficult to explain to many activists and cultural mediators that, for me, a project about racism was not simply about studying the 'Other' but also about seeing how settled, Neapolitan communities welcomed newcomers in their midst. They also often couldn't understand what was so important about the banal, ambiguous daily transcultural interaction that I was interested in. Often, when I described an episode of street racism I had witnessed in the market, they told me that this was just ignorance about the Other or suggested that I was unable to see the wider picture because I was myself an outsider or was coming at this from an Anglo-centric viewpoint. I understand the point of calling particular types of behaviour 'ignorant' as a delegitimising tool. But none of us encounter the other in a cognitive vacuum. Particular kinds of *knowledge* precede these encounters and inflect both exclusionary and convivial practices in ways that are complex ambiguous and provisional. Accounting for this ultimately teaches us important things about how questions of difference and belonging are managed by people on the ground because, and in spite of, a wider racial politics and history.

The intervention of Neapolitan antiracism has inevitably also funnelled the project in particular ways. The strong political connections in place between some cultural mediators and other activists made it possible for me to meet particular communities over others. I was able to gain access to the African market in Via Bologna, and a whole network of Senegalese street vendors working across the city, because of the longstanding relationship between Omar, a Senegalese cultural mediator, and the anti-racist scene that operates out of S.K.A. Similarly I was introduced to a group of Chinese street vendors by Wu, another cultural mediator who has long participated in putting together intercultural events and other political initiatives. Pakistani and Bangladeshi migrants also run market stalls but the connections between their community and the wider activist networks, with which I am familiar, are less strong. The reasons for this are complex, and would require more empirical research to understand properly. However, it is clear that there is a longstanding tradition of antiracist collaboration and struggle in Naples involving predominantly young Italians and black African men who are mainly first generation migrants. In appearance, though not in organisational structure, this seeks to mirror other historic antiracist struggles, particularly in the US Secondly, it is important to note that activism in the city was under severe strain whilst I was there. Power struggles and an acute lack of funding made it very difficult for people to work together on collective, common goals. So it is likely that South Asian community groups *are* working together with Neapolitan activists, but I was just not party to these projects because of the political fragmentation amongst the community activists.

However, I am not here to write a critique of Naples' anti-racist scene. More than anything I want to defend the work they do in a country with a partial welfare structure and increasing economic instability. They fulfil a number of vital roles, as campaigners,

activists and social workers for the communities they work with, and their service is often not remunerated, or only remunerated after a great number of months. They volunteer or work for small social services agencies and have to put up with precarious and short-term job contracts. The work they do is also frequently risky and upsetting, but they do it nonetheless. They are also an invaluable resource of historical consciousness about racist events and the journalistic contribution of groups like Insutv (2014) and Radio di Massa (run out of the S.K.A. squat) provides a first-hand, of-the-moment record of the different struggles going on around Naples.

The fieldwork project that emerged through the various negotiations I undertook, involved me spending large stretches of time based on the street, albeit on particular market stalls. It was important for me to take into consideration both my personal safety as well as the physical, social and psychological safety of my research participants in this environment (British Sociological Association 2002, p.2; London School of Economics 2008, p.3; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009, p.9). I had to take into account the ways that race, gender and class can affect the ways people interpret the safety of the street, as well as the fact that addressing questions of discrimination can also place people in a vulnerable position (Ali and Kelly 2004, p.123; Duneier 2004, pp.91, 100). I tried to bear in mind at all times the disparities in power, wealth and civil position between my research participants and myself as a way to manage power, knowledge and ethics (Ali 2006, pp.472-6; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009, p.15; London School of Economics 2008, p.8). At the same time I didn't want to see vulnerability as 'overdetermined and constrained' as this would have been disempowering as well (Ali and Kelly 2004, p.123). In practical terms this meant seeing informed consent as an ongoing process throughout the research, and having regular discussions with my research participants about the information I was gathering and how I wanted to use it in

the finished piece of work. The historical centre of Naples has a bad reputation but levels of crime are actually lower there than in the rest of the city (Dines 2002, p.180). Most of the fieldwork was conducted during the daytime hours of the markets and I took the usual precautions to protect my person and possessions. I know the city well, have friends and family there, and speak both Italian and dialect. I had the right support networks around me and knew what to do when awkward or threatening situations arose. I am anxious not to buy into and endorse attitudes about Naples as a hotbed of violent crime or Italian men as excessively lascivious. Having said that, street markets – and particularly Neapolitan street markets – are very male-dominated spaces and, being a young woman, this affected my personal exposure to risk, as well as the sort of data generated, to an extent that I hadn't predicted before entering the field.

I have spent a lot of time in Naples and the Campania region growing up so had a good idea of my positionality before starting the research. My Mum is from a village above Vico Equense, about one hour's drive south down the coast from Naples. She married my English Dad in 1980 and my sister and I were raised in the Home Counties. We were raised to speak English and Italian and spent at least a quarter of the year every year in the village with our extended family. I have taken blonde hair and blue eyes from my Dad and often get coded as Polish, Ukrainian, German, Swedish or American by people who don't know me, depending on where I am and who I'm with. Those that know me, in the village or through the various social networks I have made over the years, code me as 'half and half', 'L'Inglesina' (The Little English Girl), or '*A figl'è Luisa*' (Luisa's daughter). People have often reacted to my spoken Italian and Neapolitan with incredulous compliments or, on a number of memorable occasions, a patronising dismissiveness, revealing the fraught processes at stake in the recognition of a linguistic subject that is at odds with other subject positions. I don't sound right for the

way I look. These implicit maps of culture and communication are related to Naples' history as a port city and its position at the exotic end of Europe. In my case these processes of negotiation and recognition have of course also always been highly gendered and sexualised. I expected all of this and also thought, rightly, that most people who knew why I was in the market would treat me as a professional and a researcher. However, there were also a few people, generally with good intentions, who saw me as marriageable and endeavoured to find me a husband. A lot of tension also arose as a result of other vendors in the street markets and passers-by who found it unacceptable for a young woman to be hanging out on the street in the way I was, particularly if I was on the stall of a black male vendor. This was not shocking, as I had expected it, but it was still difficult to deal with and became an issue that will be explored throughout the thesis.

I began my fieldwork, in December 2011, at a moment of extreme economic, political and social tension in Naples. In May 2011 a new Mayor had been elected, Luigi de Magistris, who began a campaign against the city's informal economy and its links to organised criminality (Chetta 2012). This had a devastating effect on the livelihoods of unlicensed and undocumented market and street traders, for whom market vending was their sole chance of making a living. Conveniently a shopping mall was also being built in the centre of Piazza Garibaldi at this time, and so the licensed market stalls around the Ferrovia also had to be removed to make space for, and avoid ruining the look of, the newly regenerated square. Incomplete and inefficient welfare structures meant that the displaced vendors, like many of the most vulnerable members of society, were being left out in the cold. The daily sight of people picking through rubbish for items to sell at the illegal Roma flea market was a particularly depressing sign of the desperation created by all of this. At the same time Mario Monti's centre right coalition also brought

in austerity measures that had a dramatic effect on small businesses as well as helping to precipitate tensions already stretched to breaking point. Outbreaks of violence, self-inflicted as well as against outsiders, and clashes with police were a major feature of the time I spent there. In particular, a suicide epidemic was spreading across the country (Vogt 2012) and, in Naples, people's cultural rapport with the presence of death around them came to be intimately connected with a bitter understanding of their own disposability and precariousness.

This cohabitation with imaginaries of death and disposability are part of an older history of precariousness in Naples. Major epidemics have regularly decimated the deprived portion of the population leading to Naples being described by many as a 'living cemetery' (Snowden 1995, p.15). The images of skulls throughout the city and the recently re-opened skeleton shrines, like Fontanelle Cemetery

in the Sanità neighbourhood, testify to a history of suffering palliated by a fusion of Catholic and pagan ritual. This history is not unconnected to the economic and cultural legacies of Italian nation-building projects. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries cholera arrived in the port of Naples via colonial trade with South Asia. Returning Italian emigrants and foreigners were blamed for the epidemic, which was predominantly fatal for people who were unable to nourish themselves adequately (1995). Economic anxieties, which make a scapegoat of both immigration and ineffective urban government, are still tightly interlinked with phantasmagoria of disease, death and decay in Naples today. And street markets are central to the formation of interconnected conceptualisations of death, disease, decay, migration and urban governance. This is because markets are visible signs of the threat of worklessness and precariousness. They are public spaces of interaction with migrants

and the poor, both of whom have historically been associated with the spread of disease. And finally, the mess that markets can leave behind at the end of the working day evokes further fears of contamination, dirt, decay and degradation. I believe this is why, when asked to take photos of what Naples meant to him, one of my field participants, Gennaro, brought me a series of images of rubbish against a backdrop of street markets and the protests he regularly attends as a member of the Precari Bros., a union that represents the unemployed and underemployed. These images were juxtaposed with photos (published throughout this thesis) of the migrants working next to or hanging out around his market stall, whom he described as both a comrade in the daily struggle of survival and a threat to his livelihood.



Figure 1: Markets, Protest, Rubbish and Decay, photos by Gennaro (March – May 2012)

## The Street Markets and the Market Personalities

In this thesis I have described my research participants as street vendors or, occasionally, market traders. Both terms describe someone who sells things but the term 'vendor' particularly gives the sense of someone who sells in the street and moves about doing so. The term trader gives the sense of someone who deals in large amounts of stock, as some of my vendors do, and also indicates someone who has more fixed points of sale, like a regular market stall. In Italy they mainly use the term 'venditore', or 'venditore ambulante' for someone who moves around the city to sell their goods. I have also used the old-fashioned terms 'peddler' and 'wares' when talking about the tradition of street vending in Naples.

Race and racism are sensitive issues. Beyond the suffering caused by prejudice and racist violence, some of the people I worked with were worried about published data getting them into trouble with ongoing visa applications, affecting their work prospects, or negatively impacting their reputations. I have protected both the data and the anonymity of the research participants I am about to introduce by using pseudonyms and removing identifiers that link an individual with a set of data (British Sociological Association 2002, p.5; London School of Economics 2008, p.8). If data was excessively sensitive or shocking I made the decision not to record it or discussed it with the individual in question (British Sociological Association 2002, p.5; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009, p.13). I also blurred some people's faces in photographs when I wanted to be certain to protect their identity, when they were undergarment, or when I thought the image might cause distress otherwise. In the case of the participants with irregular pitches I have anonymised the exact location of the stalls. However, I do describe the neighbourhood these pitches are located in as that is important for analysis

of the empirical data. I have also provided a map of the area of Naples my sites were located within (see Appendix 1). Characteristics such as age, gender, and ethnicity were not anonymised because they were again crucial for analysis (Clark 2006, p.5). I tried to involve my research participants in the process of anonymisation by asking them to select their own pseudonyms, showing them my field notes and talking with them about what the final thesis might look like. They found the idea of selecting names discomforting and in the end I settled on selecting a name and asking them what they thought about it. I tried to select names that they could attach familiar and positive social and cultural significance to without conforming to stereotypes (Clark 2006, p.6). A number of my research participants did not want to be anonymised and wanted to be actively linked to the research. Some of them, such as Omar, are public figures in their community and around the market sites I researched, and so for them being identified was about making clear their involvement in and contribution to the project. Some of them, such as Titti and Ciro at Eddy Pell, saw this project partly as an opportunity to advertise their business internationally (2006, p.9). When this did not actively compromise the anonymity of another participant I used their real name as requested. In practice it is very difficult to guarantee total anonymity and so I settled for the option of maintaining an honest and open discourse with all my research participants about what I was doing and how it would turn out both during the fieldwork and beyond (2006, pp.17-18). They were involved throughout the process of data collection and write-up and I have done my best to protect them from harm.

The participation of research participants was based on informed consent. They were given an oral explanation of the nature and direction of my research throughout the process and it was made clear that they had the right not to participate (British Sociological Association 2002; London School of Economics 2008). The principle of

informed consent applied also to the use of the recording device and photography. As I have explained, interested participants were able to read my field notes and transcripts of field recordings and I showed everyone the photos I had taken. Prior to taking any photos we also had a discussion about what I could photograph. For example, in some cases I took images of the participants themselves, and sometimes only their stalls. I initially planned to give handouts, in the appropriate language, that explained the research and asked them for written consent. In practice the fraught conditions of conducting research in the street at a particularly tense political, social and economic moment in the city's history made this unpractical. Regular overt and undercover police and media interventions into street markets had made the vendors very nervous and I was anxious to avoid looking like a journalist or a public official. In fact I did not make any written notes on site at any time but wrote my notes immediately upon leaving the field.

## Via Bologna Street Market



Figure 2: *Via Bologna*, photo by author (February 2012)

This is a historic African market next to the main train station that has existed officially since 1998 (see Appendix 1). The regular traders, mainly first generation Senegalese, Malian, Guinean and Nigerian men and women migrants (predominantly men and predominantly Senegalese), were given this space on the grounds that they only sell African ‘craft’ items, such as West African fabric, wooden statues and household objects made out of raffia and cloth from the 80 to 120 stalls along the road. As D’Alessandro has pointed out, the creation of *Via Bologna* actually increased the marginalisation of these African street vendors. The concession of *Via Bologna* meant they were excluded from opening legal stalls in other parts of the city (2008, pp.154-5). As the global market has changed, and economic conditions have worsened, it has become unfeasible for most of them to continue selling ‘traditional’ African merchandise as they have been instructed. The arrival of Chinese imports has led to

most stalls selling Chinese-made clothing and accessories instead of wax cloth and wooden sculptures, although there are a couple of Nigerian women still selling traditional fabrics and silver jewellery. There are also a number of stalls along Via Bologna selling the kinds of domestic product that West African customers look for, such as bags of Kola Nuts, green tea to make Attaya, Carotene skin-lightening soaps, and a type of long, perforated flannel that Senegalese people like to use in the shower. Another dramatic change that has occurred as a result of the election of Mayor de Magistris is the planned and unplanned transformation of the African market into a ‘Multicultural Market’ which was supposed to be called ‘Napoliamo Road’ (I Love Naples Road). A number of Neapolitan street traders who had historically set up pitches along the outer rim of Garibaldi Square were evicted from those sites in August 2011 and were setting up informally on Via Bologna when I started the research. The official plan was to integrate them into a rejuvenated and redeveloped Via Bologna market, but in practice the redevelopment never occurred. Their situation was regularised in April 2012, following three months of evictions, protests and anxiety for all the traders involved in the market. The shops that run along the two sides of the street are now predominantly small Chinese-owned stock warehouses, but there is also an Italian-run grocery which has diversified to sell cuts of meat that African clients look for, as well as plantain, cassava, okra and yam. Many different languages are regularly spoken along the length of Via Bologna: Italian, Neapolitan, Wolof, Itsekiri, Pidgin, Bambara, Romanian and Arabic, to name but a few of the ones I could understand or came to recognise.



*Figure 3: Riccardo's Shop on Via Bologna, photo by author (March 2012)*

The organisational hub of the market centred around the entrance to an Italian-owned shop<sup>8</sup> that sold wholesale quantities of souvenirs at the front and then, as you passed through a curtain at the back of the shop, became a sex-shop, selling sex toys (see figure 3). The owner, Riccardo, used to employ Serigne, a middle-aged Senegalese man who had now become the informal manager of Via Bologna market. Serigne's wife, Sohna, set up a food trolley outside the shop door and Senegalese people tended to congregate there, both to socialise, eat, and have open meetings about the future of the market. Serigne, his wife (and myself while I was there) were allowed to use the toilet at the back of the shop, although the other traders had to find other solutions. The market day started at about 7am and extended, occasionally, until 5pm, although later on in my research it was shortened to 3pm. The street became a pedestrian zone during those

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<sup>8</sup> Riccardo has now moved his business to a smaller premises around the corner because he could no longer afford the rent.

hours, although this was frequently disrespected by the people needing to move through the area, particularly as the policeman meant to enforce the rule often didn't show up.

I mainly spent time on three stalls there. The first was Elage's stall, which sold Kola Nuts, soaps, t-shirts, tea etc., as I have outlined above. Elage was always surrounded by at least four other middle-aged Senegalese men, including Serigne, with whom I chatted in a mixture of Italian and French (see photo below). The second was Comfort's stall. Comfort was a fifty two year old Nigerian woman who had been trading in and around Via Bologna since she arrived in Italy twenty years previously, except for a short period when she owned an internet shop and call centre further up Via Bologna. Her stall sold Chinese-made 'urban' or 'hip-hop' style clothing, although she used to sell wax cloth. Comfort decided that she preferred to not have her stall photographed. We spoke in Italian and English. She was often surrounded by a group of Nigerian girlfriends who came to greet her and pass the time of day. They were all mainly from the Benin area of Nigeria and often spoke in their local Itsekiri dialect, although I came to understand a lot of the Nigerian pidgin they also speak as I was already familiar with it from my life in London. The third stall belonged to Gennaro, a middle-aged Neapolitan man who was one of the historic traders that had been banned from the main square. He sold Italian-manufactured socks and underwear and set up next to his cousin Alfonso who had a knick-knack stall selling things like watches, tissues, lighters and plastic passport sleeves. Gennaro used to own a shop but had felt compelled to close it following a number of violent robberies, one of which saw his father held at gunpoint until he emptied the till. After that he set up an illegal stall in Garibaldi Square in 1993 and had subsequently paid to regularise his presence there, until the events of August 2012. He was a keen participant in the various political groups in Naples that were fighting for job creation and urban renewal and his stall became the focus of many passionate

debates about solidarity and action while I was there. He and Alfonso were happy for me to photograph their stalls, but didn't want to be included in the pictures (see below). We spoke in Italian and Neapolitan dialect.



*Figure 4: Elage's Stall, photo by author (April 2012)*

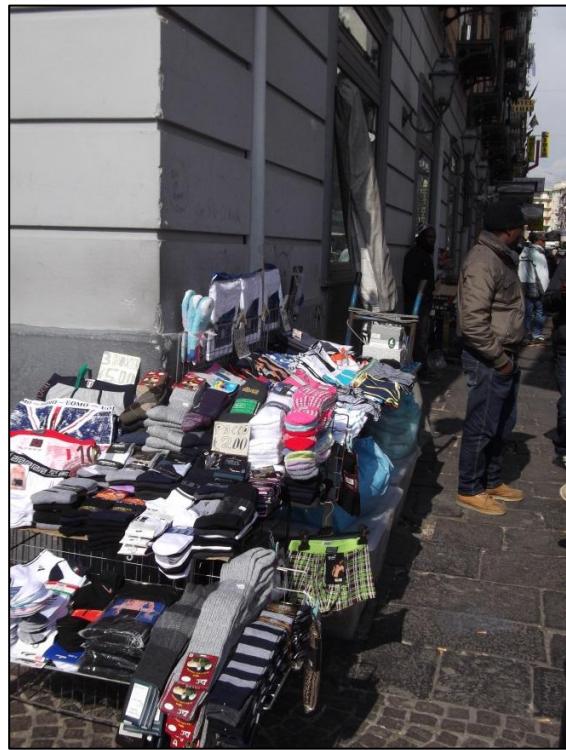


Figure 5: Gennaro's Stall, photo by author (February 2012)

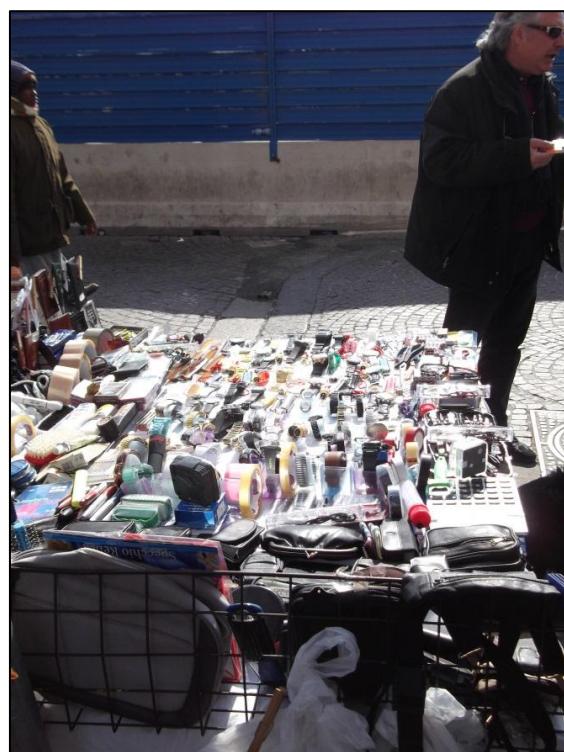


Figure 6: Alfonso's stall, photo by author (February 2012)

All these people were introduced to me by Omar, a cultural mediator and antiracist activist of Senegalese origin who is now also the President of Naples' Senegalese Association. He features in the story of Via Bologna mainly in the moments where its life was threatened. There were many other people who had something to do with Via Bologna while I was there, not least those members of the anti-racist movement who worked at migrant charities and joined the traders in solidarity when the market was being closed down. The 'refugee crisis' was also in full swing during 2011-2012 as a result of the influx of refugees arriving in Italy following the end of Gheddafi's regime in Libya (Aimi and Marceddu 2012; Corso 2012). The presence of those people, temporarily housed in the hotels around Piazza Garibaldi and awaiting asylum requests, who had set up irregular market stalls or hung out around the edge of the market, featured heavily in my field notes. The whole area around Piazza Garibaldi train station was also popular with different groups of Roma who congregated there to socialise and take advantage of the central location and large footfall to make money from panhandling and fortune telling. Also not to be forgotten is the omnipresence of state power, in the form of public officials and the stratified layers of the Italian police force, and the invisible presence of organised criminality.

### Unlicensed Pitches

The second major site for fieldwork was three illegal or unlicensed itinerant stalls that, most of the time, were set up along the major arteries of the city leading off Garibaldi Square (See Appendix 1). These pitches are an established presence on all Italian streets but were subjected to intense police scrutiny and quotidian evictions whilst I was there, because of the political atmosphere I have already described. Naples Town Hall has periodically tried to limit this unregulated selling with police intervention, but the

stubborn persistence of this form of trade is a testament to the indispensable role it plays within the structuring of the informal economy (D'Alessandro 2008, p.258). The ability to set up a stall on a cardboard box or on a sheet has always been central to the health of the slum economy in the face of the city's endemic unemployment issues. To do this legally you need to apply for a vending permit, another separate permit to rent a physical spot for your stall, and you need to pay a regular tax to Town Hall<sup>9</sup>. Obviously you also need a work visa (or EU citizenship). Street vendors are usually Italian, Senegalese, Guinean, Pakistani or Bangladeshi.

I was introduced to Ibra via a woman who had previously conducted fieldwork in Naples and had connections to the antiracist scene. He sold Italian-manufactured hats from a sheet on the pavement outside an Italian grocery shop along the road locals call 'Il Rettifilo' (Corso Umberto). As well as being one of the main arteries of the city, Il Rettifilo is important to the history of urban renewal projects that have been inefficiently implemented in the old part of the city. It was built in the 1880s as part of the 'Risanamento' project designed to protect the city's poor from further devastation through multiple cholera epidemics. In practice the luxurious and unaffordable apartment blocks that populate the length of the road are where the renewal project ended. They simply serve to hide the overcrowded and poorly-ventilated housing that was there before and persists to this day, further in decline as a result of the 1980 earthquake in Irpinia which led to many people being re-housed in the area (Dines 2002, pp.178-179; Serao 1994, p.90; Snowden 1995, p.186). Ibra was good friends with Giovanni, who owned the grocery. He was also friendly with Salvatore, the doorman of the apartment block next to the grocery, although he often behaved maliciously towards

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<sup>9</sup> This also applies to Via Bologna Market and Poggioreale Market, my third site.

Ibra. Most of Ibra's clients were Neapolitans living in the backstreets around his stall. His first language was Wolof and he had also learnt Italian over the seven years he had been in Italy. He was still in the process of regularising his presence in Italy. Initially he was extremely suspicious of me and suggested I pay him by the hour to stand near his stall. The products he sold were not illegal but the pitch had no permit, as he was not able to apply for one without a work visa. After a short discussion in Italian he relented and suggested I come back the next day. I came with Omar to introduce me and vouch for me more formally in Wolof, and the fieldwork began. I mainly spent afternoons on the stall as police controls were more aggressive in the mornings. Often I went to meet him and he wasn't there because there were too many police patrols. He told me that he didn't pay any local criminal groups to use the spot on the pavement for his pitch.



*Figure 7: Ibra's stall, photo by author (March 2012)*

Modou was introduced to me by Omar Ndiaye. He sold high-quality fake Louis Vuitton bags and wallets off a sheet on a side-street close to the Rettifilo. There are different qualities of contraband bag and it's possible to tell the difference by paying close

attention to the types of material used, the stitching, and the lining. For example, some of the better quality Louise Viutton fakes are almost identical to the bags sold in the shops, but they might have a spelling mistake on the inside label or some other small fault that caused them to be discarded and cabbaged for sale in the contraband market. As already mentioned, contraband items are made in factories in the city run by Neapolitan organised crime and sewn together by Neapolitan, Pakistani and Bangladeshi employees (Schmoll 2003). Naples is the only city in Europe where fake designer products are made and Modou made most of his money from sending packages of bags out to the rest of Italy and France. Modou was a thirty two year old Senegalese man and had endured a lot of difficulty with his visa applications in Italy due to the number of times he had been caught selling contraband. His stall functioned, needless to say, without any sort of permit. He had placed his pitch in the same spot for about five years and had a number of regular clients. He also did good business with tourists. He had very good relationships with the men who worked in the bars around his stall. He insisted to me that he didn't pay any protection money to, or rent his spot from, any local Camorra group although, as has been noted by other scholars, it is understandably very difficult to get a clear response on this issue (Rea 2006, p.6). We talked in Italian and dialect. He spoke dialect fluently and enjoyed a constant joking banter with his Italian friends in Neapolitan.



*Figure 8: Modou's Stall, photo by author (March 2012)*

For a period of about six weeks until its re-opening following re-organisation in April 2012, the market at Via Bologna was closed down by the Town Council on the basis that some traders had been accused of selling fake designer products from their stalls. During this time I met Wu, a cultural mediator for the Chinese community, who introduced me to a Chinese street trader on a road close to Via Bologna market. Ku sold electronic goods from an irregular stall on this road with a group of other Chinese vendors. I say irregular because Ku had a visa and a market stall permit, but his permit required him to move constantly and not stop in one place. His efforts were part of a family business. He worked alongside his Father-in-law and his wife and Mother-in-law ran a small stock warehouse, also selling electronic goods, in nearby Pompei. Usually he would work in this family shop or warehouse. However, hard economic times had led the family to maximise their efforts in this way. He was always on guard for police patrols. Ku and I spoke in Italian and I did some occasional fieldwork from his stall from late March 2012 until I left the field in July 2012. The stereotype is that Chinese

migrants don't learn to speak any Italian as they have no wish to mix with locals. I, however, had no trouble speaking with Ku in pretty fluent Italian.



*Figure 9: Ku's stall on Corso Novara, photo by author (April 2012)*

## Poggiooreale Market



Figure 10: Poggiooreale, photo by author (February to March 2012)

This market, also known as 'Il Caramanico' because of the street it is located on, sells high quality Made-in-Italy and Italian designer-branded clothing, shoes and accessories (although many are now selling Chinese imports) at wholesale prices (See Appendix 1). It is open from approximately 6am to 2pm from Thursday to Sunday and can be reached

in ten minutes from Piazza Garibaldi via the number 1 tram. The market is strictly monitored and managed, although unauthorised street vendors do set up stalls on the road up to its entrance in the high season (Christmas and the summer months). Vendors pay a higher fee for their spot than at other markets in town and the presence of contraband items is very strictly controlled. All of the stall owners are Neapolitan and they often employ first generation migrants to help on the stall. The clients are predominantly Italian or West African. The Italians come as regular consumers to buy gifts and treat themselves. The West African men and women come in groups to bulk-buy stock for boutiques in Europe and West Africa. This second trade is big business for the vendors. They make agreements with West African men living in Naples to act as taxi drivers and bring clients to the market and back to their hotels. Often vendors will take stock directly to the hotels of respected clients. The languages spoken with Italian clients are Italian and dialect whereas with African clients a combination of English, French and some Italian is the only way to conduct negotiations. Unless, of course, you have an English-speaking ethnographer with you who can act as translator.

I was introduced to married Titti and Ciro, a married couple who run the Eddy Pell stall by the mother of one of the contacts I had made when negotiating access. Eddy Pell sold middle-range Italian designer leather bags, belts and silk scarves from a stall which was originally opened to supplement the family's first business, a shop in the Piazza Mercato neighbourhood underneath my contact's flat. Titti introduced me to father and son, Peppe and Alessandro, of Peppe's Bags which also sold bags, although with totally different stock. About half of Peppe's Bags stock was cheaper imported Chinese bags and the other half was Italian designer leather bags. The family also had a shop in the Borgo di Sant'Antonio neighbourhood near Piazza Garibaldi where Alessandro's mother and wife worked. They regularly employed a Ukrainian man, Anton, on the

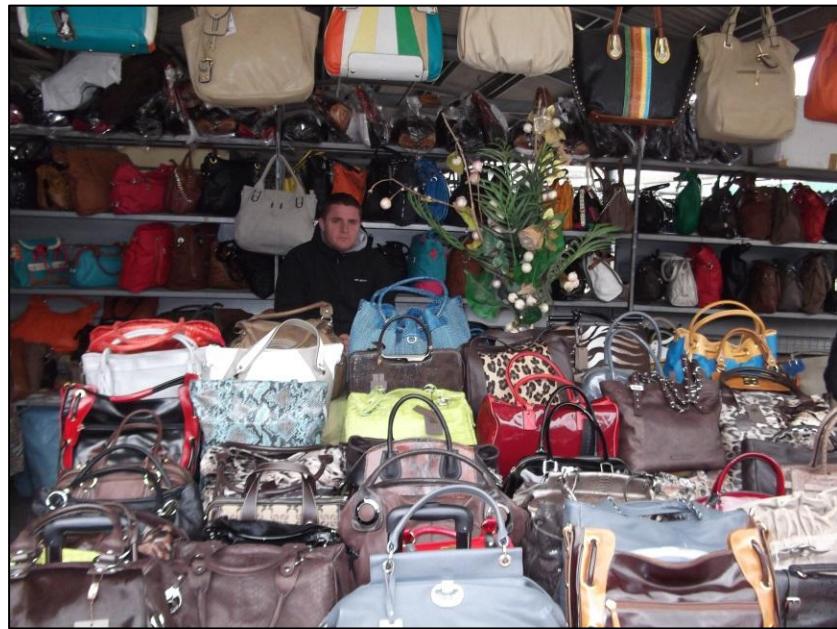
stall, to assist with packing and unpacking the stock as well as to sell bags to clients. They also employed a series of different English-speaking West African men while I was there to help with speaking to the West African clients. Alessandro told me that he had given all his employees contracts<sup>10</sup> and paid them a fair rate. I usually came to Poggioreale on the busy weekend days and spent most of my time at Peppe's Bags.



Figure 11: Ciro at Eddy Pell, photo by author (February 2012)

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<sup>10</sup> It is very common for both Italians and migrants in Naples to work without having signed any sort of job contract, so Giuseppe told me this to emphasise that he is a model employer who pays all his taxes.



*Figure 12: Alessandro at Peppe's Bags, photo by author (March 2012)*

This market was the most economically buoyant of all my sites. However it was still a bad year for the market. There were many ‘dead days’ with very few clients, particularly in the months from January to April, and a large number of empty stalls. Local Italians had little money to spend on luxury goods and there were fewer foreign clients than usual. Naples is also starting to lose its reputation as a go-to destination for good value high-end products, and many buyers told me that they were making fewer trips to Naples and more to Turkey to stock up their boutiques. I also heard from Gennaro at Via Bologna that some stall holders had been trying to sell the legal rights to their lot at vastly reduced prices. The kinds of stark economic precariousness that other vendors in the city had been facing were starting to have an impact in the higher end of retail as well. The imperatives of getting by through trade that often had to be conducted in English created cultural and linguistic interdependencies that rubbed uncomfortably alongside national and local meanings about race, difference and belonging.

Over the course of this chapter I have introduced the urban context, interpersonal dynamics and atmosphere within which I conducted fieldwork for the project. This has involved a description of the qualitative methodological approach I have taken to collecting data about language use in my sites; as well as a description of the markets and the people there. Over the following chapters I begin my account of daily life in the street markets around the Ferrovia, by describing the typical situations within which central questions of belonging, positionality and entitlement were negotiated and contested in people's talk.

## Chapter Four: Market Cries and the Neapolitan Art of Getting By

<i>Vuò sapè è che parte sò?</i>	<i>Do you wanna know where I'm from?</i>
<i>Songo è Napule e sto ccà.</i>	<i>I'm from Naples and I'm here.</i>
<i>Sto vestuto à tripulino</i>	<i>I'm dressed up like a Tripolitan</i>
<i>P'ò servizio ch'aggi'a fà.</i>	<i>For a job I'm on.</i>
<i>'Mmiez'a ll'Arabe, all'Ebreie</i>	<i>In the middle of the Arabs and the Jews</i>
<i>Rappresento ò rinnegato;</i>	<i>I'm the renegade;</i>
<i>Ma i' mme guardo è fatto mieie,</i>	<i>But I mind my own business,</i>
<i>Senza maie fa' suspecta'.</i>	<i>Without letting people know.</i>
<i>Na parola contro a nnuie:</i>	<i>One word they say against us;</i>
<i>Puh, nu schiaffo, t'ò sturdisco.</i>	<i>Pow, a punch that knocks you out.</i>
<i>Chillo guarda, io nun capisco,</i>	<i>They look at me, I don't understand,</i>
<i>E illo dico, vuò cumprà?</i>	<i>And call me 'Wanna Buy'</i>

*Extract from 'O Tripulino Napoletano' (The Neapolitan in Tripoli) by Raffaele Viviano (1925), translated from Neapolitan by author.*

<i>Ci trovi nelle piazze, ci trovi nelle vie, ci trovi nelle strade,</i>	<i>You find us in the squares, you find us on the streets, you find us on the roads,</i>
<i>Ci trovi pure al mare, camminare per ora, con la voglia di fare.</i>	<i>You even find us at the beach, walking for hours, wanting to get on.</i>
<i>Chiamami Vu Cumprà.</i>	<i>Call me 'Wanna Buy',</i>
<i>Vita ambulante (cosa vuò accatta'?)</i> ,	<i>A hawker's life (what you wanna buy?),</i>
<i>Dalle borse alle sciarpe (nun ti preoccupa'),</i>	<i>From bags to scarves (no worries),</i>
<i>Dai vestiti alle scarpe (nelle quantità).</i>	<i>From clothes to shoes (in bulk).</i>

*Extract from 'Vu Cumprà' by Goraman feat ESA (2009), translated from Italian by author.*

The two songs reproduced on the previous page are both about street hawking as a means of survival and way of life. The protagonist of *O'Tripulino Napoletano* is a Neapolitan hawker in Tripoli, Libya, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, whereas the protagonist of *Vu Cumprà* is a Senegalese street vendor in contemporary Italy. They are tied by a shared history of migration and a common identity as street vendors, or *vu cumprà*: a derogative term, used to describe street hawkers, which literally mimics the phrase they call out to potential customers: 'do you want to buy? The Neapolitan hawker in Tripoli recounts the shock of having his own market cry turned back against him as an ethnic or racialised insult; whereas in Goraman's song the idea of the '*vu cumprà*' is reclaimed as a source of pride and self-worth, despite its negative connotations. Goraman is a Senegalese singer-songwriter living in Italy, who performs in a mixture of Italian and Wolof. Although he is based in the north, he uses Neapolitan when mimicking the calls of the Senegalese vendors – '*cosa vuò accattà?*' (what you wanna buy?) and '*nun te preoccupà*' (no worries) – highlighting the fact that Naples is an important entry point for Senegalese (and other) migrants, and the place where they often cut their teeth linguistically as street vendors in Italy.

Market stalls have traditionally been one of the most important and visible ways in which people mitigate the weight of economic uncertainty and joblessness in Naples. As with many other elements of the slum economy (Pardo 1996) the decision to set up a pitch, known as 'fare bancarella', can require the stallholder to operate in semi-legalities, without correct documentation, and thus in regular flight from police controls. Because of this it is vital to set up horizontal forms of cooperation with others using the marginal space of the pavement to protect their investment and make a living. The informality and precariousness of these commercial survival practices makes Neapolitan markets key sites of intersubjective interaction in the age of globalised migration. The stubborn,

interstitial forms of traditional commerce that are still in operation there provide an ideal space for new actors to insert themselves into, with a small amount of capital and whether or not they are in receipt of a work visa (D'Alessandro 2008, pp.152-4).

This episode from the field illustrates what 'L'Arte di Arrangiarsi' (The Art of Getting By) can look like today in Naples' street markets:

It was a sunny afternoon in late February and it finally seemed like the unusually cold and lengthy winter we had experienced was releasing its grasp on the city. I was sitting at Comfort's clothes stall, at the Piazza Garibaldi end of Via Bologna market, warming my bones, chatting with Comfort and her cohort of Nigerian girlfriends and generally watching the world go by. A Neapolitan street vendor joined the line of Guinean men selling contraband sunglasses off unregulated mobile market stalls at the entrance to the market. He was wheeling a huge, steaming, steel cooking-pot that he slipped into line with the rest of the men. Inside the pot was something which, although the seasons don't mean anything anymore, made those in attendance think greedily of summer: boiled corn on the cob. The man tilted back his head, took a deep breath, and cried out *roi roi! roi roi!* starting out high and bringing the pitch of his voice down dramatically on the second *roi* of each pair. Although we all understood that he was advertising the corn, many people, including me, didn't understand the meaning of his words. Gennaro later explained to me that he was shouting, in Neapolitan, 'two lira! two lira!' just like the street peddlers of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century who sold portions of spaghetti in the street for that amount of money. The cobs themselves cost 50 cents. One West African man, sitting on the railings at the top of the market, was particularly tickled by the performance and imitated the sounds the vendor was making – *ahhhh-ohhhhh! Ahhh-ohhhhh!* – whilst laughing

uproariously. The vendor looked sideways at his mocker with an expression of deeply insulted dignity but carried on calling out to potential customers. He obviously knew a good thing because his stall was almost immediately besieged by stall-holders, market regulars and other passers-by. Together they chomped with satisfaction on their pieces of corn and then joyfully tossed the husks over the blue wall that had been erected around the Piazza Garibaldi building site. Although anomalous next to the Guinean vendors, the Neapolitan man was easily incorporated into the line-up. An hour or so later a patrol of municipal police slowly started to descend down our side of the Piazza to clear out the unlicensed hawkers. As was typical, warning of their advance reached the men, via a network of people stationed up the side of the road, in time for them to wheel their stalls down Via Bologna into the backstreets of the Vasto neighbourhood and escape detection. The corn vendor was attentive to the same warning signs as the other men running irregular stalls near Via Bologna market and employed their same tactics of evasion, fleeing and then returning with them five minutes later to set up his pitch again.

The main protagonists involved in the above episode were Italians who were living with long-term worklessness and migrants who were unable to work legally because of Italian visa laws. Innovative forms of transcultural collaboration were generated through the ways in which the different vendors made use of and shared the space of the pavement for their earning activities (Mitchell 2003, pp.3-6). This happened for pragmatic reasons, that temporarily did away with paranoias about political austerity and anti-immigration sentiment in order to survive collectively and reciprocally despite unequal positionalities. These sorts of semi-legal and improvisational economic alliance, which are part of a bigger system of organised subaltern group work, were quasi-political survival strategies (Hall et al. 1978, pp.327-397) whereby excluded

lumpen Neapolitans and migrants renegotiated the terms of their own disposability and created a network of support and security for their loved ones. As well as this being a matter of routine practice, the vendors I worked with were also aware of the ways in which they were bound to each other in order to be able to ‘arrangiare’, or get by. Following Voloshinov’s (1986, pp.23-24) notion of discourse as ambivalently and multiaccentually transformative, in the first part of this chapter I examine the ways in which people’s discussions about street vending worked to contest and renegotiate cultural understandings about the profession. Given the negative light in which much street vending is painted, I start by describing how street vendors themselves justified and defended the work they did. Following that I explore the ways in which customers at street market stalls mobilised the negative view of street vending as a way of reinforcing racialised power dynamics. As I show, humour often worked as a threat to remind vendors of their vulnerable legal and economic positionalities. This recalls the point that Bakhtin made about the destructive potential of the carnivalesque market (1984, pp.10-12), and also Passerini’s descriptions of the damaging side of comic behaviour under fascism (1987, pp.67-126). Finally, I examine how the activities of even less accepted forms of hustling – things like scamming, begging and fortune telling that took place near to street markets – impacted upon the life of those markets in terms of their relationships both with potential customers and with the forces of law and order.

Both Bourgois and Wacquant have argued that skill as a talker is key to the economic success and ‘oppositional style’ of the street hustler (Bourgois 2005, p.8; Wacquant 1998, p.4). True to this, market transactions, like the above, were conducted through a raucous and comic ‘billingsgate speech’ (Bakhtin 1984, p.17) that revived the echoes of older market traditions whilst adapting itself and being adapted to the new urban reality.

The corn vendor’s cry of *roi! roi!* evoked the traditional figure of the Neapolitan

peddler. But this image was then interrupted by the interactive and reciprocal reception his presence activated amongst the people present, and the harmonious way he worked alongside the non-Neapolitan vendors, shedding light on the interrelated politics of l'arte di arrangiarsi in its current composition. As Bakhtin has explained, 'types of relations' between people and 'particular conditions' of communication generate particular speech genres and styles in which they are delivered (1986, p.64). In Naples, these mobile and plastic genres, tactically produced localised spaces of manoeuvre in situations of inequality and domination through multiple appropriations and re-appropriations of language. Following De Certeau's arguments about the tactical re-appropriation of the city, the particular urban environment in which the vendors were operating created transformative opportunities not available elsewhere in the city (1988, p.98). Thus the success of their intersubjective communicative tactics depended upon the place-making struggles that produced the space of the market and structured it according to the needs of the people making a living there. In the second part of this chapter I explore the transcultural speech performances related to buying and selling – the market cries – that are typical of the street markets and market personalities I encountered in the field. In particular I am interested in greetings and humour, bartering in Neapolitan, bartering in English, and *Sapé Fà* or market 'know how', which manifested as a highly-communicative, multilingual, bartering spiel. The multilingual nature of these dialogical acts of buying and selling in Neapolitan street markets was significant because, as Glissant's (1997; 1981) writings about the multilingual as an index of convivial transcultural Relation argue, it spoke of a pragmatic relationship with, and acceptance of, difference as an ongoing reality of life in Naples today. The material and symbolic verbal exchanges that took place in street markets showed the ways that alterity was handled in order to facilitate trade and economic activity

(Schmoll 2003, pp.7-8). They also uncovered the uncontainable excess that resulted from multilingual interaction and transaction across multiple axes of differences.

## How Street Vending is Defined

### Defending Street Vending as an ‘Arte di Arrangiarsi’

For my research participants, there was a powerful awareness of the ways in which street vending made particular sorts of interaction possible between migrants and Neapolitans.

Alessandro and his family have had a stall at Poggioreale market called Peppe’s Bags for the last decade. Like many other vendors at the market, they started out with a small warehouse in the centre of Naples and took on the stall in order to make more money. There were many things about running a market stall that Alessandro said he had struggled to get used to. He and his goods were at the mercy of the weather and he always had to wear his oldest and most casual clothes. He told me that when he went on business trips to meet suppliers and re-stock the warehouse he wore a suit and made time for wining and dining. He also thought stall holders were common and rough: ‘they shout’, he told me, ‘and they use nasty words’. In fact he didn’t ever let his wife work on the stall, which he had come to manage after taking over from his father Giuseppe. His wife ran the family shop as he felt that markets, unlike shops, were unsuitable working environments for women and so she was safer there. After we had been working together for a while he asked me whether I had a boyfriend. I told him I did. He then asked me how my boyfriend felt about me coming to the market to do research on my own. Given the steady circulation of West African buyers at the market, Alessandro’s stall made enough money to employ one or two regular assistants. He generally took on Ukrainian and West African men to help with both the selling and the

labour of putting up and taking down the stall. In particular he found his African employees helpful in the bartering process with West African clients. These negotiations, which I return to later on in the chapter, happened primarily in English and generated anxiety for many of the Italian stall holders. He told me he had tried employing Italians but they had been historically unreliable about turning up on time for work.

The rough and rowdy ‘billingsgate’ language (Bakhtin 1984, p.17), which formed the sonic background to Poggioreale market, was central to Alessandro’s discomfort with his profession as a trader. He recognised that this represented a negative stereotype, associated with lower class status, poverty and semi-legality, and so sought to disassociate himself from this by emphasising his finer tastes and habits when he was able to get away from his stall. The distinction between shops and market stalls was made by many of my Italian research participants. As Gennaro and Alfonso from Via Bologna market often reminded me, the difference was not one of practice but of position: they all sold the same products but market traders were considered to be socially inferior because they couldn’t afford to rent a shop and so sold their products from the pavement. Alessandro’s feelings about women working in markets were connected to this aspirational and classed discourse about commerce. His insistence on maintaining the gendered heteronormativity of market spaces, where women were customers but not vendors, allowed him to position himself squarely within a masculine provider role associated with wealth and status. It was also a way in which he exerted power, not only towards the female relatives he talked about, but also towards me, by making it clear that he believed I was breaking social taboos about women in public spaces by being there. Linguistic processes also encapsulated the uneasy power dynamics between Alessandro, his English- or French-speaking West African customers, and the foreign

men he hired to help out on the stall. The importance of the African buyers at Poggioreale market had complicated established racialised hierarchies about getting by and economic cooperation across transcultural boundaries. Instead of seeking work, these migrant buyers created economic opportunities for locals, in contrast with the dynamics of street markets in the rest of the city. As well as being reliable, and cheap, labour, Alessandro's employees also answered his need for people capable of assisting with the multilingual, transcultural bartering processes that were his stock-in-trade.

In some instances, vendors' descriptions of having to manage difference as part of a daily tactic of getting by bled outside of economic practicalities. Gennaro had worked side by side with migrant vendors, both as a regulated and unregulated vendor, over a twenty-year period. The greater horizontality of his and their work routines, as well as his politicisation through involvement in the Precari Bros. unemployment movement, had seen him develop a vocal politics of transcultural solidarity with other street traders:

**Gennaro:** I mean do you think I was born to be a street vendor? I'm a street vendor because I haven't had other opportunities to work. I don't think these boys who've come over from Africa say, 'let's go to Italy! Let's go to Naples! Let's go and be street vendors'? No! They came here because they thought there might be something more for them. Then you see that there isn't and the first thing you can do honestly is sell a product. You sell it and you stay alive, right? That's what we do too! I told this person (**Narducci, a town councillor**) that if someone loses their job and is unemployed for months on end and can't find anything, even though Monti says that

job opportunities need to open up because everything is blocked and ‘boring’<sup>11</sup>, (**sarcasm**), then do you know what he does? He goes to fill a bag with a bit of merchandise in it and he goes and sells it... It’s just basic! Or if he’s dishonest he goes theiving. That’s how I see it. So, if we want to fix this city. If we want it to be reborn. We need to build our foundations right here, do you understand me?

Gennaro’s emotional defence of street vending made use of his understanding of politics and powers of oratory. As someone who left school at the age of eleven, these were skills he had built through his work and activism. In his speech, street vending was quasi-politically repositioned as a humble but honest form of capital accumulation, central to the urban growth and renewal that he saw politicians talking about but unable to implement. Not only did he place himself in dialogue with hegemonic discourses about work and the city, but he showed that he had personally faced up to powerful people when he described his conversation with the town councillor. Speeches like the above became key to the formation of contentious discourses and political action when the livelihoods of my street vendor research participants were threatened during my fieldwork. This is examined closely in the final chapter. Here, though, it is interesting to reflect upon the ways in which Gennaro’s ideological discourse contrasted with his description of the lived experience of getting by across transcultural boundaries:

**Gennaro (July 2012):** This here (**figure 13**) is the inter-ethnic market because there are Neapolitans – well in reality there are Africans and a few Neapolitans. The market was first opened up to new vendors in April 2012, so quite recently really,

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<sup>11</sup> Gennaro was quoting the then Premier Mario Monti who, in the wake of the reform of the labour market, stated that, ‘young people need to get used to the fact that they won’t get one (indefinite contracts). Permanent jobs are boring, it’s nice to change.’ (La Repubblica 2012)

and this photos shows how the different ethnicities live together. Also there are various other situations because here there are a few Egyptians too, you know? That kind of thing...



*Figure 13: Via Bologna 1, photo by Gennaro (April 2012)*

**Gennaro (July 2012):** I just took this photo (**figure 14**) to show the immigrants who are behind the stalls that give them their living. Well – living – it is what it is here and it turns out –

**Me:** So is the newly-organised market working out now that there are more Neapolitans here?

**Gennaro:** No, the market doesn't work well because it is badly-organised and run even worse. It's not publicised – no one knows where it is. A better market was set up here in 2000 but then it was done to sort out a number of people who were spread out across the city to make an immigrant market, not an inter-ethnic market, as they called it. But in any case, having got this place, it never really made much money.

**Me:** Didn't they sell different stuff before?

**Gennaro:** Yes – in the beginning they sold objects from their home countries. You know – those wooden objects of things like elephants all made with their own hands. And, as a novelty, this worked well for them for a while – oh yeah they also sold those musical instruments – they sold well because they were a novelty and didn't cost much. Now they're selling the same merchandise that we Neapolitans sell and so there's competition.



*Figure 14: Via Bologna 2, photo by Gennaro (March 2012)*

For Gennaro, the images of people and merchandise, which he described as ethnically marked, offered a material manifestation of the kinds of transcultural economic rivalry and tension that had arisen in street markets since the economic crisis had started. The daily footfall through Via Bologna market was very low during my time in the field and most of the time vendors sat inactive and frustrated throughout the working day. Gennaro's photos worked together with his narrative to substantiate his way of thinking about the problems of getting by at Via Bologna (Knowles 2006, p.512).

Gennaro and Comfort have known each other for at least twenty years as they have had

their stalls in and around Piazza Garibaldi for that length of time. They have been on marches together and they have watched each other's children grow up. They have also spent ten years of their twenty-year acquaintance not talking to each other following a falling out over differing definitions of comradeship and solidarity. My arrival in the field marked the end of this decade-long hiatus. On one occasion in late May I arrived in Via Bologna to find that Gennaro and Alfonso had not set up their stalls that day. I called Gennaro and he told me they were trying out a spot on the other side of Piazza Garibaldi. Comfort approached me to ask where the two men were and I invited her to come with me:

**Comfort: (on arrival)** So do you have any permit to set up here?

**Gennaro:** Can't you see there's no one coming by?

**Comfort:** Today I haven't sold anything... There isn't even a mosquito flying through Via Bologna. No one's selling anything. How are things here?

**Gennaro:** It's worse here than there! We wanted to give it a go but no one is stopping. Everyone just passes through and doesn't buy. Since this morning me and Alfonso have had one sale each. So in Via Bologna...?

**Comfort:** Antonia, how are things in Via Bologna?

**Me:** Ha! Well, yes, no one is coming through the market. It's worse than before.

**Comfort:** See? It's not just me saying it... But if you are selling well here you should tell me...

**Gennaro:** Don't worry Comfort. We know as well as you what things are like in there. We're just saying things as they are here. We all sell different products so it's not like that...

For Gennaro and Comfort, the art of getting by was also the art of managing the fraught

boundaries of economic, social and political difference that intersected their daily working relationship in a delicate balancing act of shifting power dynamics, convivial togetherness, and paranoia. At Via Bologna market vendors were constituted in and by the ambiguous, unequal and improvisational positionality they occupied in relationship to other vendors as well as to their customers and the institutional bodies regulating street market activities.

Street markets often appeared to be joyful and exuberant places, although, as Bakhtin has noted (1984, pp.9-12), festive laughter of course has the capacity to revive and renew notions of belonging whilst also destroying, retreating and excluding. Neapolitan street vendors talked about enjoying their work and taking pride in earning their money honestly and in a traditional way. As Ciro of Eddy Pell at Poggioreale told me, 'the market is an anti-depressant', even when business was slow and the weather was freezing cold. Gennaro explained that:

**Gennaro:** There are people in this city who don't want to suffer like we do. But we (**market vendors**) really like the contact you have with people in this job... and being at ease with what we do. You know, you go home and you've worked honestly, you've met other people... In summer we meet people from Germany... Brazil...

And:

**Gennaro:** You know when you work as a street vendor people act like you're second division. Because, you know, we do the same job as shop-keepers. We deal with the same clients except we interact more directly with them. But – mon amie - it may be more direct but it's more human!

But the fact remains that, despite the ideological corpus of vendor pride that challenges hegemonic discourses about street vending, markets were hard places to work and generally not people's first choice of livelihood. The hustle enabled people to arrange but offered a precarious living with little in the way of social safety nets.



*Figure 15: Elderly Street Vendor, photo by Gennaro (March 2012)*

This picture reproduced above is one Gennaro took for me of an unknown elderly street vendor. He was an itinerant peddler who had stopped for a short rest on the corner of Via Bologna and Piazza Garibaldi. I asked Gennaro why he had taken this image and he said:

**Gennaro:** These are people that in an advanced age, you know, being very old they have a small stall; but at this age they continue to sell on the streets because the person who sells on the streets is getting the money they need to get to the end of the day. Do you understand?

**Me:** Does he just sell magazines?

**Gennaro:** No it's a bit mixed because he sells, say, good luck charms, toys, nuts – you know – a bit of everything. It's a little bazaar.

**Me:** And it makes you sad...

**Gennaro:** Yes it makes me sad because I'm forty eight years old and I have to think that this person is like seventy five or seventy six and they are still doing this job. That really depresses me. But it is what it is.

### Mobilising Notions of Illegality and Criminality Against Street Vending

It is quite common to hear people complain about street vending in Naples. They are particularly referring to unregulated stalls that sell contraband and take up space on the pavement. Poggioreale, and other regulated markets selling specialist goods away from the main thoroughfares of the city, are not painted in the same light but, as D'Alessandro has argued (2008), regulated spaces of commerce in Naples are not significantly different from unregulated or under-regulated market spaces in terms of their merchandise or connections to informal and semi-legal economies. Most of all, though, people complain about the presence of migrant street vendors, doubly implicated by the perceived illegality of both their profession and visa statuses. This litany was often heard issuing from the mouths of Italians as they passed by Via Bologna market, a licensed and regulated African market next to Piazza Garibaldi:

*Get all this stuff out the way, move it! God this is Africa here now!*

*This is Africa here – It's not Europe anymore!*

The figure of the black migrant street vendor haunted other moments of market barter, as the following field excerpt shows:

It was late May at Poggioreale market and an elderly Neapolitan woman and her daughter approached Alessandro's stall. They were looking for a suitcase because their last one got broken during a cruise holiday and they were getting ready to go away again. They also wanted to know if Alessandro could fix the old suitcase for them. They discussed the different brands on the stall and Alessandro tried to dissuade the daughter from one particular bag, because it was not very sturdy. He agreed to have a look at the broken suitcase. Then the daughter wandered over to the selection of soft holdalls that were at the front corner of the stall. She started reflecting that she might prefer a soft bag to a regular suitcase:

**Daughter:** *You can get more stuff in a soft bag*

Alessandro nodded, indicating that this was undoubtedly the case. But her Mother objected to this:

**Mother:** *No. We would look like one of those Negri on the streets.*

They left the broken suitcase with Alessandro and decided to go away and think about what other suitcase to buy.

African street vendors and buyers often move their goods around Naples, on foot or on public transport, in black holdalls or in large plastic sacks on trolleys. These activities create tension not only because they are taking up a lot of space in a crowded and busy city, but also because of a racialised refusal of their presence. This is undoubtedly something that is alimented by a national and international anti-immigration politics, which plays out at a local level in struggles over spatial and cultural configurations of public space (Mitchell 2003, p.16). But the reaction of the elderly Neapolitan lady points to something more than this. By seeking to disassociate herself from the image of

the black street vendor and his unwieldy bag of wares, she was also recognising an uncomfortable commonality between herself and them. Street vending is perceived to be something people fall to in order to arrange when there is no possibility of doing anything else. By evoking Neapolitan poverty it also speaks of emigration, the South, and the attendant racial categorisations that have historically impacted upon Naples. The soft, easily transportable and capacious holdall is symbolic not only of the threat of destitution but also redolent with connotations of Neapolitan inferiority, both of which the lady wished to distance herself from.

I often noticed that customers who came to look at merchandise on the stalls of migrant vendors would mobilise negative ideas about street vending as part of a show of intimidation against the vendor:

It was early May and I was again sitting with Comfort at Via Bologna on the new stall she had been allotted, away from the more remunerative entrance of the market. She was chatting in pidgin to two male friends, complaining that no one was coming up the market to her stall and she wasn't making any money. To better illustrate her woes she drew a stack of crumpled, unpaid bills out of her handbag and asked us how on earth she was going to pay them. She then showed her friends a grey and lime green polo shirt she had in stock. A very tanned Italian man in skinny jeans and a pink polo shirt approached in interest:

**Comfort:** you interested? (**holding up the t-shirt to him**)

**Man:** Is it a fake?

**Comfort:** (stiffening in suspicion) Go away! Go away!

**Man:** (**affronted**) But why? How much is it?

**Comfort:** Do you want it? Ten euros. Are you gonna take it?

**Man:** (**cracking up laughing**) yeah right!

**Comfort:** Go away then! Bye, now! Shoo!

**Man:** why are you being like this?

**Comfort turns her back to the man who frowns, shrugs and walks off.**

‘Is it fake?’ was a question I often heard Neapolitan customers ask migrant vendors, as a prelude to, or following, a transaction. During the time I was doing fieldwork, unregulated street vending was under attack by a City Hall keen to stamp out evidence of informal or semi-legal economic practices and their ties to organised criminality. The customers would smile widely as they asked, something that stood at odds with the discomfited and fearful reaction that they clearly provoked. The vendor was extremely aware of the vulnerability of their position and their customers seemed to enjoy the power this gave them. Their laughter at this stock joke reflects the oppressive side of the carnivalesque market place that Bakhtin described (1984, pp.10-12). In this case it functioned as a ritualised threat, reinstating hegemonic ideas that linked together migrants and criminality as opposed to subverting them. The unequal legal and economic positionalities occupied by street vendors within the hegemonic order put them at risk of being hurt by anyone wishing to exact power over them (Passerini 1987, p.89).

The same kinds of playful-threatening dynamic animated other sorts of stock performance between vendors and their customers. In the following episode I was doing fieldwork with Modou again when a Neapolitan man swaggered aggressively towards his stall:

**Customer:** *So, whats this here?! I am gonna confiscate all of this stuff! What do you want for it (indicating a designer tote bag)?*

**Modou:** *But you won't pay me!*

**Customer:** *Look I'm interested in a style that looks something like this bag here (he indicates a woman's cross-body bag)*

**Modou:** Yeah...

**Customer:** *Well? Is it a good one or not? I asked you a month ago?! Look how I'm walking around, look?! (he indicates his own tattered bag)*

**Me:** What brand is it?

**Modou:** *The man's style*

**Me:** But it still has a cross-over strap?

**Customer:** *Yes – but what have you got on you?*

**Modou:** *Not much really. There are some good bags here but the one you want - it costs a bit...*

**Customer:** *So bring it to me!*

**Modou:** *I'm not bringing it back and forth.*

**Customer:** *You bring it to me – I'll take it.*

**Modou:** *Ok...*

**Customer:** *How many bags –*

**Modou:** *You're right –*

**Customer:** *How many bags have I bought off you?*

**Modou:** You're right... Ok which day?

**Customer:** *You know (to me) you don't know me and you might think that I (turning back to Modou) have I bought other bags off you? Or not?*

**Modou:** *What a joker? (laughs)*

**Customer:** *So will you bring it to me? Holy Mother Mary!*

**Modou:** *Ok then what day... Tuesday?*

**Customer:** *Wednesday?*

**Modou:** *Ok, if you want. I'll bring it for you. A hundred per cent.*

**The man bids us goodbye and heads off.**

The Neapolitan, a local man who Modou clearly knew quite well, played the role of the demanding customer here, even though Modou clearly thought he had no intention of actually making the purchase. He was right – I asked later and the man never came the following Wednesday for the bag which, in any case, Modou hadn't bothered to bring for him. The Neapolitan man's outraged exasperation and religio-comic invective to the Virgin played up to a stereotype of the jokey Neapolitan, in the grand tradition of Neapolitan comedy acting. However it was significant that the interaction started with him pretending to be a police officer about to sequester Modou's contraband merchandise and potentially arrest him for breaking the law. Humour, again, served as an ambiguous threat that reinstated the dominance of the macho Neapolitan male. This reflects some of Sarnelli's data (2003, p.51) from a different market in the city. The man was making it clear to Modou that what he and other Neapolitans had given to him in terms of inclusion, they could also take away.

### The Impact of Other Street Hustles on Markets

Other types of hustle also took place along the edge of street markets and interspersed between the laid-out sheets of unregulated market stalls. These activities – which included illegal scams and the flogging of stolen goods as well as things like begging and fortune-telling which were merely disapproved of on moral grounds – had become associated with the life of street markets and provided an easy excuse for the further pressure being exerted on them by the city's institutions. This made for a difficult cohabitation between those practicing these different money-making tactics and stallholders who, nonetheless, recognised that they were trying to arrangiare.

### The ‘Pacchisti’

Groups of Neapolitan men hung out at various populous locations around Piazza Garibaldi. They held out smartphones to passers-by, calling out ‘iphone?’, ‘ipad?’ in hushed tones, particularly reaching out to people who seemed to be tourists or who they thought might not be Italian. Most people walked right past them but some people, eager to get a good deal, took the men up on their offer. If the mark was convinced by the proposal, they were taken into a side street to complete the deal. They handed over their money and left with their wrapped-up purchase, which the Neapolitan men advised them to bundle quickly into their bags. When they got home they discovered that the box was empty except for bubble-wrap and some weights: they had been the victims of a scam. This was one of a number of scams that got pulled along Neapolitan streets every day that took advantage of the fact that people knew it was possible to buy cheap stolen goods around Piazza Garibaldi. These men were popularly described as ‘*pacchisti*’ because of the phrase ‘*fare il pacco*’, which is Neapolitan jargon for tricking, conning and taking advantage of. ‘Pacco’ also means ‘package’, in Neapolitan and Italian, thus referring to the material object that was central to the particular scam being practiced. Those who got ‘done’ generally accepted the loss. Either they avoided going to the police because they didn’t want to admit they had tried to buy what must clearly have appeared to them to be stolen goods off a street corner; or they were too scared to go back and confront the groups of men who were part of a large network of visible and invisible people spanning out across the area. This was not always the case, however. On one occasion an African man came marching down Via Bologna market, in a fury, shouting, ‘I want my money! I want my money!’ A massive brawl ensued between the *pacchisti* and the African stall holders who came to the aid of the Nigerian man. The man did get his money back, after threatening to call the police. Serigne told me there

was no way they were going to let the Neapolitans have one over on them although, as Gennaro said, they had been known to beat up people who come back for their money.

There was an uneasy truce between the stallholders and the *pacchisti* at Via Bologna while I was there, which aimed to quietly mitigate the damaging effect these groups of men were having on the existence of the market. They were the very embodiment of the Neapolitan sly thief, a masculine stereotype that positioned the Neapolitan poor as petty criminals who were tied up with organised criminality and the threat of violence. The *pacchist*' was always a man, although he sometimes had women helping him snare his marks by pretending to buy into whatever service he seemed to be offering (I have had female friends who have been offered upwards of fifty euros to collaborate in such a way). This is not to say that women didn't run scams themselves; but the spaces of those scams, and their coding within the local hegemonic order, were managed differently, as will be seen in the following section. The stallholders were very sensitive about how the activities of these men made them look but they weren't powerful enough to banish them entirely. They made it clear that they did not respect their presence there by avoiding too much conversation with them and refusing requests for lighters and other sorts of intersubjective collaboration that was possible between stallholders. When trouble came to the market, with the added threat of unwanted further police scrutiny, they came to the aid of the victim. But most of the time, when they saw a con taking place, they just ignored it. I was requested and advised to do the same.

However my presence did not go unnoticed at Via Bologna. On my first day there one of the tricksters, seeing that I was hanging around, approached me and asked if I was Polish. Once I had managed to convince him that I wasn't, he bluntly asked me what I was doing in the market. I explained that I was doing research about Neapolitan markets

and he smiled warmly, wishing me luck. I never became too friendly with any of them although I did meet a man who had previously worked the same con in the area. He had gone ‘straight’ and emigrated to the north of Italy to become a salesman of vacuum cleaner parts. This man had grown up around Piazza Garibaldi and, over a kebab, told me all about the Senegalese family he lived next door to growing up who let him try the food they cooked, and the bits of Arabic he had learned from Moroccan and Algerian street peddlers. An uneasy morality underpinned this art of getting by for those practising it because they were not as easily able to resort to notions of honesty, hard work and humility as the street vendors were. Instead, they evoked a transnational ideology of solidarity – that rotated around processes of cultural and linguistic sharing – to argue that, despite what they did for a living, they were still good people inside and shared a common humanity with the other disenfranchised peoples of the world. On one occasion I bought a lunch of rice and stew from a Nigerian woman who sold food from a mobile trolley. As I was eating, an elderly member of the group of *pacchisti* asked me:

**Man:** *Yum! Can I...?*

**Me:** can I offer you some? (**I offer out my food for him to taste. He smiles and shakes his head**)

**And after I had finished:**

**Man:** *Have you eaten well... Your tummy's out to here! (he indicates a full stomach with his hands)*

**Me:** And have you had your lunch?

**Man:** *Everyone's got to eat. I do a dishonest job. I make packs<sup>12</sup>. But I never forget to think of those people who don't have anything to eat.*

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<sup>12</sup> This is a literal translation. He means: ‘I scam people’

## The Roma



*Figure 16: Pop-Up Roma Market, photo by author (December 2010)*

Via Bologna market was also frequented by groups of Roma of all ages, generally in family groups. They walked around up and down Via Bologna, and around the whole Piazza Garibaldi area, asking for money and sometimes offering to tell people's fortunes. I also saw Roma people foraging in bins all over the city and placing items in makeshift cardboard trolleys. The foraged items were sold off sheets at temporary street markets (see photo, above) that sprung up on the pavements and in the small squares around the Ferrovia. These markets did not encroach on other market sites, but occupied the edges of narrower pavements, spilling out onto the road. Many people in Naples described the pop-up Roma markets as a sign of urban decay and degeneration. From what I could see they were some of the most popular and crowded street markets in the city, particularly as the economic climate worsened, and customers were primarily other migrants living in the city. Occasionally police would come and order the vendors to

leave, kicking their merchandise all over the road. The markets only re-appeared in different locations and at different times of day.



*Figure 17: Abandoned Goods After Police Raid, photo by author (June 2014)*

I did not work directly or consistently with any Roma people during my fieldwork, although they played an important role in a number of pavement events I witnessed because of the ways in which their tactics for getting by worked alongside the other commercial activities going on around street markets. Many of my research participants expressed prejudiced views about the ways in which the Roma made money, and particularly the practice some had of involving their children in money-making activities instead of sending them to school. Most criticism was directed against Roma women, who were highly visible because of their dress, and who were seen to transgress heteronormative laws about the presence of women in public spaces and the role women should play as mothers. I occasionally saw people shout at the Roma children and young women who were begging for money. On one occasion Serigne's wife, Sohna, mockingly told a young woman, 'you like money, don't you?' before relenting and

putting some change in her outstretched hand. Many in the market felt that they were already struggling to get by without contributing to economically support Roma panhandlers as well. They also complained that the Roma market vendors left unsold items as rubbish all over the pavement when they closed their stalls up for the day. In fact, as figure 17 depicts, the mess left behind by the Roma markets was often the result of police raids which had caused the vendors to pick up their stuff and flee. This fed into more generalised comments about the Roma being dirty which I heard from more than one person. These racist views were common ones that I heard expressed in and out of the market spaces I was doing fieldwork in as part of a generalised rejection of the Roma that occasionally erupted into extreme violence<sup>13</sup>.

On one occasion I was introduced to a group of Roma women who were begging and telling people's fortunes next to Piazza Gariabaldi train station. Carmela, the cultural mediator who took me to meet them, was hoping they might help me with my research:

**Older Woman:** *Give me some money! I have to buy a sandwich for my child.*

**Carmela:** *I don't have anything. I don't have any coins.*

**Older Woman:** *Is that really the truth? You're not telling me lies now, are you?*

**Carmela:** *I've bought you this girl because she wants to learn about the Roma people and how you are treated here.*

**Roma Woman:** *Give me some money first (to me)*

**Carmela:** *No, if you are going to do it you have to do it from your heart. You can't ask for money.*

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<sup>13</sup> For example the pogrom of the Roma camp in Ponticelli, Naples, in 2008 and in the Poggioreale neighbourhood of the city in March 2014 (Cronache di Ordinario Razzismo 2014). Last summer an unknown person threw acid down onto a Roma child from a balcony in the Fuorigrotta neighbourhood (Mazzone 2013).

The woman again appealed for some small change and eventually Carmela told me to just give her some change. The woman proceeded to tell me that they were 'Gitani' people and they were split into many different groups. Her daughter then drew me to one side and, after gaining money for a coffee from me, told me they were Neapolitan Roma and had been living in the city for many generations. She then removed a torn quarter of a lottery ticket from a stack she had in her handbag and told me she was going to tell me my fortune. On the lottery ticket she had written a list of numbers, looking like this:



Figure 18: My Lucky Numbers, photo by author (March 2012)

The meaning she attributed to the numbers were derived from the 'Smorfia Napoletana', a numerical code going back centuries where each number up to one hundred has a number of religious, mystical and profane significations that can be used to tell fortunes

and, latterly, have been used in the Neapolitan lottery<sup>14</sup>. She took hold of my right hand, palm-side up, and made some further predictions. Then she asked for a note from my wallet. Sighing, I give her five euros which she folded around the half of the torn lottery ticket. She ripped off half of the ticket and told me to drop it into the breeze to cast off the evil eye. Then she explained that her predictions would come true if I gave her the note, but only if I gave it to her willingly and didn't tell Carmela about it. I agreed to do so and said goodbye to the Roma women.

The next day I complained bitterly to Gennaro about the experience. He reassured me, in case I was superstitious, that I had only lost the money and nothing worse was going to happen. I had been had, as part of a scam that both Roma women and men carry out in order to make money. This scam is ethnically-marked because it relies on ancient paranoias about the Roma as people who practice magic and can cause harm through spells and sorcery. He pointed out a Roma man walking past us with a bird sitting on top of a half-open box full of folded up lottery tickets like the one I was given. The bird, which Gennaro told me is either tied to the box or has had its wings broken, is taught to pick up a piece of paper with its beak and then the fortune is told from that selection.

The groups of Roma who tell fortunes, one of a number of ways in which they get by in Naples, make use of centuries-old mystical practices that syncretise pagan and Catholic beliefs in Naples. Although the Roma are known stereotypically as fortune tellers worldwide, the divinatory approach utilised in my case was replete with Neapolitan and Mediterranean 'spiritual resources': particularly in the combination of the use of the

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<sup>14</sup> A full list of meanings for numbers can be found online (see Portanapoli 2014). My numbers are: 13 (Sant'Antonio), 33 (Jesus' age at crucifixion) and 48 (a dead person speaking). From these a series of predictions were made for me.

Smorfia and the expelling of the evil eye alongside Catholic religious practice (Pardo 1996, pp.104-135; Gilmore 1982, pp.197-98). Although this has never happened in my family, it is not uncommon to have a relative (often but not always a woman) who knows how to check for and remove the evil eye in a ritual that involves recitation of the rosary, making the sign of the cross, and a bowl of water and olive oil. These ceremonies almost always take place within the home, however, and there are many who disapprove of such practices as pagan sacrilege, as Gennaro's comments show. The Roma woman's prescient skill, and the rapid Neapolitan of her delivery, pointed to a fusing of Roma and Neapolitan cultural practices – themselves the result of constantly hybridising interaction across vast distances and multiple boundaries – that testified to a cohabitation between the Roma and the Gadje that goes back centuries. However distrust and rejection on the part of the settled community has long characterised this relationship, and this is reflected in the unwillingness of Roma people to speak to or collaborate with outsiders, as can be seen by the way I got taken for a ride in the above episode. An examination of the task of getting by in Naples pointed to the multiple ways in which Roma survival tactics interlocked with the concerns, culture and work of other people making their livelihoods on the pavement. It also pointed to the ways in which Roma survival practices were further marginalised within this community.

## Market Cries Across Transcultural Boundaries

Street vendors, especially if unlicensed or undocumented, made use of ways of talking that help them to get by financially whilst managing the increasingly oppressive and fraught intersubjective dynamics at play in Neapolitan street markets. The tactical deployment of greetings and humour, bartering in Neapolitan, bartering in English, and *Sapé Fâ* (or market 'know how') allowed vendors to encourage business whilst also

legitimising their presence in the crowded and contested space of the pavement. In the following part of the chapter I examine these market cries in more detail.

### Greetings and Humour

When I met him, Modou had been laying down his piece of cloth on the same patch for the last seven years. He had developed relationships with a lot of the people who lived and worked in the area, in particular the men who worked in the bar nearby, which he patronised, and a couple of men who he enjoyed lively football banter with. One person even allowed him to store some of his merchandise in his shop to avoid him having to carry it back and forth. Modou was careful to greet everyone he knew as they passed by in a vibrant mix of the local and international forms of salutation he had picked up on the job. Doing participant observation with him was often a series of:

**Modou:** *Yo, Lellooo!*

**Lello:** *Alright, dude?*

**Modou:** *Hola!*

**X:** *Myfren!*

**Y:** Modou!

**Modou:** *Cava?!*

**Modou:** **(to one person)** *What's up, hey! What the hell do you want? Get the hell out of here!!* **(to another person)** *Hola Chico!*

These highly raucous and vociferous greetings were an important way in which Modou established reciprocal relationships with the Italians who were his occasional customers and who he came into contact with everyday. They didn't question his right to set up in

that spot and, beyond patronising his stall, often helped him in some important way. This shouldn't be taken to indicate genuine affection and trust between Modou and the people he greeted so warmly. I remember that on one occasion, following an onslaught of greetings, he turned to me and said:

**Modou:** 'I just can't stand those Italians'

The fact that Modou felt comfortable expressing such feelings to me is demonstrative of the particular positionality I personified in the field. To the Neapolitans I was a quasi-insider, an Italian from abroad who was visiting the homeland and representative of other people they knew who had left the south. To the migrants I worked with I was an outsider, sort of like them, and they felt comfortable letting off steam with the sorts of complaints and criticisms about their host country that they would share with their own compatriots.

Occasionally, though they were unplanned, discourses about cultural difference and solidarity were also opened up in these market greetings. For example:

**Modou:** (to Italian man walking past stall) Merry Christmas!

**Man:** What! But you don't celebrate. You're Muslim! (**mouth turns down at the corners in mock distaste**)

**Modou:** (holding both palms up) *What's that mean? I can still give you greetings!*

**Man:** You're right: one race (**he makes his fist to his chest in solidarity before hurrying off**)

Not all migrant street vendors shared Modou's self-confident and jokey linguistic style. Ibra, another Senegalese vendor I worked with, preferred to simply greet people he knew with 'ciao' or call out 'prego' or 'prego capo' ('tell me' or 'tell me, Boss') when

potential customers lingered by his stall. These forms of greeting were more deferential and devoid of humorous intent, partly because Ibra was a much quieter person who was not in the nature of whooping and shouting. Also, his greetings were the traditional ones that were utilised by market vendors in Naples. It was significant that Ibra did not choose jokey Neapolitan forms of greeting, as Modou did, even though he certainly understood Neapolitan and would have known how to say things like '*uagliò! tutt'a'post'?!*' ('Yo dude! What's good?!') if he wished to do so. The people I was working with were individuals who found ways of coping with their situation in the manner best suited to their personalities. As a devout Muslim, Ibra took seriously the lengthy religious and cultural formalities that structure Wolof greetings. The friendship between him and Giovanni, who owned the grocery shop behind his stall, was genuine and respectful and, as Giovanni told me, it took some time to develop. Every time I came to work with Ibra we would greet each other, always enquiring after each other's families, and then he would then tell me to go and greet Giovanni. His way of calling out to people also seemed to me to be a signal of the precarious nature of his spot on a city street that was regularly being patrolled by police at the time. Aside from his friendship with Giovanni and with Salvatore, there were predominantly tense relations between the street vendors and shop owners along the road. Ibra's choice of greetings was a cautious spatial acting-out of the place in recognition of these fraught local dynamics (De Certeau 1988, p.98). His and Modou's different styles of offering greetings reflect the 'particular conditions' of communication and communicators in their respective market spots (Bakhtin 1986, p.64).

Using humour to call out to potential customers also acted as a buttress for communicative difficulties in multilingual contexts, as the following illustrates:

It was the start of summer and I was sitting with Ku on a mobile stall next to the main train station. A group of Ivorian men and women were standing in front of me chatting in French about how they were going to organise their day. One of the men said to the group, in French, ‘please could you drop my brother off at home’ and started to move away from his companions. The rest of the group also started walking but were then stopped in their tracks by Neapolitan man on a moped who rode up onto the pavement and screeched to a halt in front of them. They stopped talking and stared at him. He held up one index finger to them, raising his eyebrows to indicate for them to wait a minute and pay him attention. Then, wiggling his eyebrows up and down in clown-like amazement, he reached down for a plastic bag held between his legs and drew out some ties. Again he raised an index finger and told them ‘one euro!’ in English. He sifted through the ties and spread them out in his hands to show them off better, all the time looking at the ties in wonder and looking up at the group with an amazed smile and raised eyebrows. Everyone smiled at the man and one of the women did strain her head to have a better look at the ties. The Ivorian man who spoke before turned back to find his group still fixed on the spot. He approached the Neapolitan man, eyeing him wearily: ‘look, one euro!’ said the vendor. The Ivorian man waved his hand dismissively saying ‘*leave it out*’, in dialect, and started shepherding the group away. The vendor protested, in English and then Italian, ‘one euro!! Look! The woman was interested!’ They moved on and the man shrugged his shoulders dramatically, shaking his head in bewildered amazement that they could miss such a good deal. Then he started the motor of his moped and drove off.

The Neapolitan hawker in the above scene did not have a fixed stall but sought to sell his wares by roaming the city itinerantly on his moped. Mopeds are cheap modes of

transport in Naples – a second hand one can cost as little as 400 euros – and often whole families make use of them for travelling around the city. This particularly humble form of vending allowed those who practiced it to make good use of busier parts of the city at different points in the day and week. On the switch-side it wasn't possible to carry large amounts of merchandise and lacked the security and familiarity offered by a regular stall and customers. Here the vendor used his moped as a prop to grab the attention of the people he wished to offer his ties to. This was dramatic and funny as well as being slightly threatening – people do often drive their mopeds along the pavement in Naples and pedestrians are advised to be wary of them lest they try to grab a handbag as they pass by. However, the vendor deflated any anxiety he might have created with a comedic performance that combined gesture and the small amount of English he was able to use. Whether or not they spoke English, there was no doubt about the meaning of 'one euro', when it was combined with his hand gestures and facial expression. He first played up to the stereotype of the Neapolitan thief (Sarnelli 2003, p.49) and then performed the stereotype of the Neapolitan joker. In so doing he reached out to and connected with his foreign interlocutors across cultural and multilingual divides and tried to persuade them to buy something from him to help him arrangiare. His choice to use English and gesture to grab their attention needs to be understood as a survival tactic; but also signals his openness towards living with and across difference, in the way that Glissant described (1997, p.144) without seeking transparency of comprehension and without insisting on neat intersubjective boundaries.

## Bartering in Neapolitan

The following exchange took place at Modou's stall. Modou sold fake Louis Vuitton bags and accessories that, as Schmoll's (2003) study has shown, were made in factories in the city by Neapolitans and Bangladeshis:

A young couple was taking an early evening stroll. They were fashionable; both of them wore skinny jeans, branded trainers, and the boy had carefully manicured eyebrows. The girl stopped at Modou's stall and picked up a Louis Vuitton tote that she liked the look of. They spoke in Neapolitan:

**Girl:** *How much do you want for this?*

**Modou:** *Forty euros*

The boy reached out and picked up a smaller version of the tote bag.

**Boy:** *Myfren, how much for this 'Uitton?*

**Modou:** *Thirty-five.*

**Boy:** *Come on that's too much! Listen here: I work in the factory where they make these bags. I know how much they cost. How much d'you pay for each one there: twenty?*

He puffed his chest out and grinned at his girl who giggled, rolling her eyes and smiling at me.

**Girl:** *Don't worry about it!*

**Boy:** *Twenty-five, myfren, twenty-five.*

**Modou:** *Ok!*

The boy paid Modou who went to get the protective cloth sack that came with the bag for transport.

**Boy:** *Don't bother. She's gonna wear it right now.*

The couple walked off smiling and holding hands. Modou commented to me that he had achieved quite a good price for Naples – he had paid seventeen euros for the bag at the factory.

In this exchange both men tried to mobilise their insider knowledge of the contraband industry in Naples to secure a profitable deal. Whether or not the boy actually did work in the factory making fake bags as he claimed, he made use of rumours that circulated in certain quarters of the city about the health and value of the market. Choice about language also played a crucial role here. Their use of dialect was an indispensable part of the manifestation of their shared specialist knowledge and reflected a situation where, in markets specifically, migrant men were able to use humorous Neapolitan and barefaced cheek in a way that was not permitted to other migrants in different working environments (Tucciarone 2002). Its use also generated particular kinds of masculine street cred, to do with being savvy, streetwise and sly about business, that guaranteed respect was forthcoming on both sides. The young man spoke loudly and ostentatiously and called Modou 'myfren' (my friend), a cheeky and slightly underhand way I noticed young Neapolitans had of addressing African men. If he had wanted to be more respectful he would have said, 'amico mio', in Italian not English. Modou was not Neapolitan but had learnt to transact in this way following long experience and permanence in the city. The confidence he displayed came from the recognition that he took big risks selling luxury fakes such as these. He asked for high prices because he

knew people would stick around to haggle him down. This was not the case for street vendors who sold lower-end contraband or Chinese imports.

The use of Neapolitan in comedic market exchanges was intrinsic to both the successful management of pavement relationships and to the general intersubjective socialities that were experienced on a daily basis. The laughter produced by barter in Neapolitan was unofficial and informal and its very distinction from the verbal forms used in official public discourse allowed new kinds of temporary and ambivalent hierarchies to emerge (Bakhtin 1984, pp.16-17):

**Modou:** (to young man carrying a sports bag) *Whats 'up?*

**Man:** *All good, all good.*

**Modou:** *Where you going?*

**Man:** *To the gym.*

**Modou:** *Ah..*

Meanwhile, an older man snuck up to Modou's stall while he was talking to the younger man and picked up a bag, making as if to run off with it.

**Modou:** (noticing) *Hey, thief! Marioooo!*

**Modou** laughs but jogs over to the man to retrieve his bag.

**Modou:** (turning back to the young man) *You're not watching the match tonight?*

**Man:** *No – I'm going to the gym.*

**Modou:** *You don't like football?*

**Man:** (bending to pick up a bag) *This is nice.*

**Modou:** *There's another one even more nice nice... you want it? 180 euros. You want it or not?!*

**Man:** *You wanna give it to me?*

**Modou:** *If you want!*

**Man:** *Wow, good present!*

**Modou:** *Where you gonna have the party then – here or at yours?*

**Man:** *See you later! (heading off)*

The joking sociality of Modou and the Neapolitan man's banter about football, the gym and the bag he liked, was sidelined by the older Neapolitan man playfully attempting to steal Modou's merchandise. The older man was playing up to stereotypes about the Neapolitan thief and Modou responded by calling him a '*latrì*' (thief) in dialect and laughing. As Sarnelli noted in his work on markets in Naples, this was a common practical joke carried out by Neapolitan men against Senegalese vendors which often built up to a sort of bullying (2004, pp.30-31). Here Modou laughed it off and called the man out – in dialect – so as to show he knew what was going on and the older man couldn't get the upper hand on him. Because of the history of political, economic, cultural and linguistic subordination in Naples, and because of the kinds of oppositional style that emerged in an urban scenario where organised criminality competed so openly with the state for control of the local economy, Neapolitan use had come to stand for a particular sort of gangster or '*guappo*' street machismo. It was used by men in playful and competitive situations, that took place between Neapolitans and migrants in racialised transcultural interactions, to avoid losing face and give out a tough, masculine vibe that assured respect and survival. Women were also able to perform a sort of *guappo* femininity. A friend once told me about a scene she had witnessed on the beach of a group of women bullying a Bangladeshi vendor. One woman grabbed merchandise off his stall and, with each item, told him there was nothing he could do about it because she was married to someone important and dangerous who could hurt him. The

gendered balancing of power between Modou and the older man was echoed in the heteronormative, ‘blokey’ conversation Modou was also simultaneously having with the younger man about football and such forth. I noticed that Neapolitans often jokingly asked for items to be given to them when they haggled at market stalls, as part of a play on southern Italian forms of reciprocity and gift-giving. For example, I heard this exchange taking place at Poggioreale market:

**Neapolitan Woman:** *I've got to give someone a gift!*

**Ciro:** *Yes it's YOU that's got to give the gift to someone, NOT me!*

**Neapolitan Woman: (laughing)** *That's a good one: “you've got to give the gift”...!*

**Ciro:** *You know my love, I would like to do it but I've got no dough!*

Even though the man at Modou’s stall didn’t have any real intention of buying the bag he picked up, the performance of bartering in Neapolitan allowed for different positionalities and balances of power to be explored between the two men. It placed them both within a common socioeconomic context to do with the need to arrangiare. Further to this, the humorous jargon of market trade acted as a trope for the dialogical exploration of the different levels of transcultural interactions in the city. The exchange ended with Modou agreeing to see him later for a party. The enjoyment taken from their performance of Neapolitan bartering presented the possibility of transcultural socialities being extended from a cloth on the pavement into the private sphere of the home.

### Bartering in English

Over the years market traders in Naples have learnt to barter in a number of languages which are not their own and which they would not need, or be able, to use outside the context of the street market. Gennaro described a situation to me around the Ferrovia

where phrases and lexical items from Arabic, English, French and Ukrainian had very been useful to the traders when migrants first started arriving in large numbers in the 1980s; but where, now, different variations of the local market patois of Italianised-Neapolitan or Neapolitanised-Italian were mostly sufficient for the conduct of trade, alongside the occasional bits of English and French. This was what I noticed happening too. However, given the particular composition of the buyers going to Poggioreale market, where people flew in from Europe and West Africa specifically to buy items for shops before taking them back home, the vendors there had to be able, in Alessandro's words, to 'barter in all the necessary languages'. A lot of money was exchanging hands in some of these transactions and they were often a reasonably lengthy process. The use of English was the dominant language of barter with foreign clients, and the imperatives of getting by in situations of linguistic insecurity could generate stress and paranoia, as will be explored further in Chapter Six on Talking about Talk. My records of multilingual barter at Poggioreale also show the considerable communicative skill and zeal that was involved in such transcultural economic encounters, as the following excerpts show:

It was a sunny day in late March and Poggioreale market was starting to pick up after an unusually slow winter. Clients thronged around Eddy Pell's fabric-covered tables and elegant displays of accessories, picking things up and examining them inside and out. I could hear vendors calling out to clients across the market: 'come look, come look!', 'one eurooooo!', 'eighteen for three euroooo!' Ciro sold a set of silk scarves to an Italian woman whilst, at his request, I kept an eye on the numerous people surrounding the stall to make sure nobody tried to steal anything. A West African woman with a male companion and small child in a buggy started to

examine some handbags and, recognising the possibility of a sale, Ciro approached her:

**Woman:** (holding up a small brown leather handbag) This how much?

**Ciro:** Thirty.

**Woman:** Give me twenty-five. I buy four.

**Ciro:** Is not possible. This is not Chinese. This is all Made in Italy – excellent quality!

**Woman:** Please, please!

They continued to negotiate prices, with Ciro explaining that he generally only gave a discount on larger purchases. He relented and the woman bought five bags at twenty-five euros a bag. She and her partner started to pack the purchases in a large holdall they had brought with them. The woman's child was leaning out of the buggy, touching the handbags and pulling on the scarves which were artfully draped round their handles. It was making Ciro nervous that his products would fall and get damaged so, to attract the woman's attention to this he said:

**Ciro:** Your daughter is like my daughter – always touching!

The woman smiled distractedly and, pulling her child's hands away, said goodbye and moved off.

This exchange showed the levels of linguistic complexity that traders at Poggioleale – who have generally not studied much English or spent any time in an English-speaking country – needed to be able to manage when speaking to their customers. The language was functional and relied on long-established scripts that were used by vendors in street markets across the city when trying to convince their customers to part with money.

Vendors explained that their products were Made in Italy not Made in China. As such they were of excellent quality, and superior to Chinese-made goods which were of inferior quality. Given these products came directly from the warehouses in the city where they had been manufactured, they were already at the best possible price, but were not as cheap as Chinese merchandise due to aforementioned quality differences. These themes were contextually situated within the particularities of the Neapolitan economy where Chinese competition in the retail market was felt to be directly impacting upon the ways in which people survived and got by. This context generated the particularities of local market haggling as a sort of speech genre that could be delivered in a number of different languages. Normal sorts of tension that arose from conducting business in chaotic and crowded public spaces could also be managed, depending on the linguistic resources at the disposal of the vendor or the customer. Ciro's basic English was good enough that he was able to tactfully communicate to his customer that she needed to stop her child making a mess of his products. The comparison he made about their daughters sought to establish a reciprocal link between his family and her family's wellbeing.

As an expert English speaker, my presence at Poggioreale significantly impacted upon the interactions that took place between the vendors I was working with, and their customers. One of the first things they said to me when we agreed to work together was that I could help them speak to their English-speaking customers. The following two excerpts show how this worked in practice:

**Giuseppe:** Tell her it is all stock price

**Anton:** Yes explain her...

**Me:** He's saying that –

**Giuseppe:** Tell her it's already a great price

**Nigerian Woman:** Yeah I want him to give me a good price. I buy from him all the time. All the time here I come. I come here and I buy stuff. So he has to give customers discounts.

**Me: (to Giuseppe)** She says she comes here all the time so she wants a discount

**Giuseppe:** It's already discounted. Already discounted!

**Me:** He says it's already discounted...

**Nigerian Woman:** You know customers can't be satisfied like that. he has to do something. So you'll be happy and come again.

**Me:** Shall I say that? (to the woman)

**Nigerian Woman:** Yeah.

**Me:** She says you have to satisfy your clients so they come back again.

**Giuseppe:** No, no no!

**Nigerian Woman:** Why are you being like that?!

Giuseppe had had enough of this discussion and turned his back, walking to the other end of the stall. I stayed talking to the Nigerian woman for a few more minutes about coming to buy merchandise in Poggioreale before she had to get on with making her purchases.

The following episode of barter in English involved Ade, a Nigerian man who worked in marketing and lived in Nigeria, Alessandro and Giuseppe (of Peppe's Bags). Ade and his sister were discussing, in Pidgin, the prices and selling points of a set of bags with a woman and her baby, when Giuseppe asked me to get involved in the haggling process:

**Giuseppe: (to me)** do you understand? Or can't you pick up anything?

**Me:** They're comparing things, like colour and material... thinking about what would sell well.

**Giuseppe:** Oh!

...

**Giuseppe:** Sorry, what's your name again?

**Me:** Antonia

**Giuseppe:** Tell them those bags cost loads of money –

**Me:** Yes and you bought them at stock price –

**Giuseppe:** For their benefit.

**Me:** Ok so he's he's saying that this bag originally was very expensive but they buy it from the factory, create a stock and sell it at a lower price so the quality is very good and the price is very good.

**Ade:** So what is he saying actually?

**Me:** Sorry?

**Ade:** What's he saying?

**Me:** That's honestly what he's saying. Look: this is the original price... because what they do is they buy – I can't remember what the word is – they buy...

**Ade:** In quantity?

**Me:** Yeah. They buy in large quantity to give you a good price. You come to Poggio reale because everything has been bought directly from the factory so it's a good quality bag at a good price

**Ade:** Ok.

**Giuseppe:** Tell him that these ones are leather and are a real bargain – only forty euros!

I did as Giuseppe asked and then explained my project to Ade and his sister. They agreed to have their photos taken and the conversation recorded whilst they bought. Once they had selected the bags, with Alessandro and Giuseppe's help, the actual negotiations started. As the following photos show, I remained in physical proximity to the discussion as I recorded and photographed it, so that I could continue assisting with interpreting.



*Figure 19: Selecting, Bartering and Interpreting, photos by author (April 2012). From left to right in bottom photo: Alessandro, Ade's sister, Ade, and Giuseppe.*

**Giuseppe:** So...

**Ade:** So... we are buying plenty!

**Giuseppe:** So look at this, look (he raises his eyes at me, nodding to Ade to indicate I should cut in to get Ade's attention)

**Me:** You see this?

**Giuseppe:** This: forty, forty, forty, thirty and thirty (indicating all the bags).one hundred and eighty!

**Ade:** One, two three...

**Me:** Three at forty...

**Ade's sister:** Check how many are forty! These two thirty thirty... he can't give you good price?

**Giuseppe:** No. finito! (crosses open palms under each other and flicks them both outwards to indicate 'no') This is the best price!

**Ade:** No no no no: customer (gestures to himself) me: talk to me. I'm your customer.

**Giuseppe:** No, no: finito. If you want: one hundred and eighty. One hundred and eighty. Finito.

**Ade:** customer, customer...

**Giuseppe:** No, no... One hundred and eighty.

**Ade looks at me in exasperation, indicating with a flick of his head that I should intervene on his behalf.**

**Me:** I'm not a haggler

**Ade:** O you don't want me to haggle?

**Me:** Well you can try but I can't do it for you!

**Giuseppe:** This is already at stock price. Tell him it's stock price.

**Me:** He says it's already stock price. He can't... at the risk of not making a profit. And he says that (to Giuseppe) being a client –

Ade and Giuseppe eventually agreed on the original price of one hundred and eighty euros. Ade paid in cash, with a five hundred euro note. Giuseppe searched for the

complementary mirrors that come with the bags and Anton, the Ukrainian assistant, was instructed to remove the stuffing and pack them in cloth sacks.

Large amounts of money were being exchanged in these sorts of transaction and tempers could fray quite quickly with both parties accusing the other of being crafty or discourteous. The photos above are also illustrative of the closeness of the space under the roofs of the stalls at the market, which obliged people to invade each other's personal space whilst haggling, leading to further anxiety and discomfort. As the above episodes showed, when I was placed in the middle of bartering processes, both sides questioned me closely, unsure whose side I was on. I found myself in an awkward position as I felt obligated to help out but was aware of the ways in which I was influencing the sale and, often, endorsing the point of view of the Neapolitan vendors who had called me into the process, by embellishing the things they were asking me to translate. What made things worse was that I clearly wasn't able to mediate the deep currents of transcultural tension and distrust that these processes of barter evoked, as can be seen from the raised voices and body language of both vendor and customer. Ade, who was new to the process of buying abroad, found the negotiation of cultural and linguistic differences in the market a major source of worry. He told me separately that not being able to communicate effectively with Italians was making him feel distrustful and isolated. The Neapolitan street vendors at Poggioreale were similarly anxious. As well as having to barter in foreign tongues they complained about the haggling style of the West African buyers, which they thought was overly aggressive.

The importance of the African buyers at Poggioreale market complicated established racialised scripts and hierarchies about getting by and economic cooperation in the city. Barter in English re-awakened older inferiority complexes about speaking English – and

other northern European languages, but mainly English – that had come about from the collective experience of Italian emigration. Naples' particular experience of modernity has had a profound impact upon the ways in which Neapolitans welcome or, don't welcome, newcomers into their midst. I explore this throughout the thesis and return to the question of speaking English in Chapter Six.

Instead of seeking work from Italian employers – and obviously then contributing to the economy through tax and consumption – the migrant buyers at Poggioreale created economic opportunities *for* Italians, in contrast with the dynamics of street markets in the rest of the city and in contrast with an anti-immigrant politics that said migrants took people's jobs or relied on charity. Vendors often found themselves hiring English-speaking African assistants to help them communicate more effectively with their customers. On one occasion a Nigerian buyer, in the throes of indecision, asked me to help her choose between a brown or beige handbag. I told her I preferred the brown but she would know her client better than me. But Christopher, who was Nigerian-Togolese and Giuseppe's occasional assistant, had more nuanced advice. He told her: 'This one (brown) for black people. This one (beige) for yellow people.' The woman nodded thoughtfully and turned to me, saying in English, 'my clients are very demanding. They only want the best.' In the end the woman left without buying anything. It wasn't only the fact that Christopher could speak English to her, but also that he understood West African taste and aesthetics in a way that was supportive to Alessandro and Giuseppe.

I saw that the frustration and resentment Giuseppe and Alessandro felt about bartering in English was often taken out on their migrant employees. On one occasion, during a rather stressful negotiation where Alessandro had punched a series of prices into the calculator incorrectly, and so ended up having to accept a lower price from the

customer, he turned to Anton, their Ukrainian help, and shouted viciously, ‘you’ve been here for six years. When are you going to learn some Italian?’ Anton stared at him without speaking. On another occasion, Giuseppe instructed Christopher to remove the paper stuffing from the bags he had just sold and Christopher didn’t do anything because he hadn’t understood. ‘Take out the paper! The paper!’ screamed Giuseppe in Italian, miming his hand going inside a bag and grabbing something. Christopher responded, ‘Oh the paper!’, before muttering in English ‘you should have just said.’ Later on that same morning, two belt stands on the side of the stall fell over in the wind. Giuseppe shouted at Christopher to go and get a canister to weigh the base of the stands down better whilst he and Anton set about picking up the belts. Christopher came back with some rope and Giuseppe screamed, ‘a canister!’ at him, making the shape of a canister in the air. When everything was back in its place Giuseppe told me he regretted having lost his patience. He said that he was just really worried about the stands breaking as they were expensive. These particularly aggressive examples of ‘foreigner talk’ (Schmid 2002) show how ways of talking could be used as part of racialised acts of domination and silencing.

The Poggioreale vendors also made deals with West African taxi drivers who ferried customers and their goods between Poggioreale market and their hotels. These men also brought clients directly to particular stalls, in exchange for a small fee. Giuseppe only paid them if he had managed to sell his more costly leather items as he said he couldn’t afford to pay for customers who came and only bought Chinese goods. On one occasion a taxi driver approached the stall to ask for his cut. Giuseppe explained that the customer only bought Chinese goods so there was no payment. The man got angry and told him in threatening tones, ‘Ok I’ll give it to you for free’. Giuseppe looked intimidated and shrugged his shoulders, reaching for his pocket. Alessandro noticed this

and shouted at the taxi driver to, ‘Fuck off and die!’ The man scowled and strode away.

Alessandro then accused his dad of being weak and needing to toughen up.

Whether they liked it or not, the vendors at Poggioreale were inextricably tied to their migrant brothers and sisters both living in the city and passing through. The art of getting by through trade in retail – and the imperatives of a trade that had to be conducted in English – created cultural and linguistic interdependencies that rubbed uncomfortably alongside national and local meanings about race, difference and belonging. Misunderstanding, refusals and other forms of racialised linguistic violence erupted alongside multilingual cohabitation and cooperation.

### *Sapé Fà or Know How*

As Pardo has explained, *sapè fà*, or know-how, draws on an understanding of geographical, political, economic, social, administrative, moral and cosmological boundaries in Naples as shifting and fluid. It is key to successfully negotiating and mediating unequal and ambiguous relationships of power in Naples, particularly when one is engaging in practices that can blur the boundaries between the formal and the informal (Pardo 1996, pp.184, 136). In the street market *sapè fà* manifested in a particular form of fiery and persuasive selling spiel. It was a way of communicating that was multilingual and switched between a variety of linguistic codes in the effort to be extra clear, or in the effort to be deliberately unclear; as a way of convincing the customer by being both intimidating and impressive. The following excerpt from a recording in the field shows how it’s done:

**Gennaro:** (to approaching client) Tell me, tell me!

**Customer (West African man):** How much this? (He is pointing to a pair of socks)

**Gennaro:** This here is one size fits all

**Customer:** And this? (another pair of socks)

**Gennaro:** This one is size 39.

**Customer:** 39... hmm... And how much does it cost?

**Gennaro:** This pair costs three euros

**Customer:** how much?!

**Gennaro:** Because this pair is better... these others cost two euros. Can you see where I've put the price?

**Customer:** Too expensive!

**Gennaro:** Hmm... but have you understood what kind of sock this really is?

**Customer:** I've understood!

**Gennaro:** No I want to show you. I'm not forcing you to buy, yeah? I just want to show you. Ok, so this kind of sock is a technological thing. Can you see those bands inside the edge that stop the sock from slipping off? (he shows him) The fabric is also of a kind of quality that really keeps the heat in! It's not a Chinese product but Italian-made – and that's an important fact. Look: 'Made in Italy', written on the packet.

**Customer:** Please, I can't speak Italian well!

**Gennaro:** Yes – I'd realised you weren't Italian! (laughs)

**Customer:** I have little money

**Gennaro:** Trust me, I'm worse off than you, may be you haven't understood! Let's do two euros fifty, yeah? Come on, amico mio!

**The customer throws up his hands in refusal and walks away.**

**Gennaro:** Look here, there's about three kilos of wool in this sock. Three euros!

Gennaro started his spiel with 'Tell me! Tell me'. This opening cry, a rough translation of the Italian 'prego, prego!' is commonly heard shouted out to customers across Italian markets. Etymologically it derives from the Latin noun 'precaria', which means something that is obtained through prayer (ETIMO 2008). Needless to say it is connected to the idea of precariousness, which highlights how intrinsic the links are between market vending, market crisis, and material survival. Despite initial linguistic confusion – Gennaro thought the client was asking for information about sizes where in fact he was asking about prices – he nonetheless launched into a complicated technical explanation about the sock's manufacturing as a way of dazzling and impressing the man into buying. He took advantage of the fact that the African client's Italian was not strong enough to be able to follow the entirety of his explanation and laughed knowingly when that man asked him to slow down. However he switched his expert stance towards the end of the transaction. When the man explained he didn't have much money, Gennaro positioned himself as equally needy, appealing to the client's sympathy and generosity to make the sale. He called the man 'Amico Mio' (My Friend). This has not been translated into English because, as explained earlier in the chapter, Neapolitan men often called out 'myfren!' in English to black African men they encounter in the street. These same men also said things like 'o'bio'!' (Blondie) and commented on their dark skin tone or physical size: 'God, aren't you black!' and 'oh my God, how tall are you?!" Thus the tone of 'My fren' appeared sarcastic and cheekily offensive. Calling someone 'amico mio', in Italian as Gennaro did, was more respectful and sincere.

Gennaro's market *sapè fà* took advantage of a complex understanding of the different linguistic subjectivities animating public life around Piazza Garibaldi. Like many other transactions I observed, the discussion was fast and concluded quickly. Gennaro also became quite pushy in an attempt to complete the sale, something he admitted he didn't like doing but felt compelled to in the harsh economic climate. The diverse selling tactics he used highlighted his positionality within the intersubjective hierarchies in Naples. He was located in ways that relied on the security he enjoyed as a man and as an Italian citizen with particular rights and resources that migrants and female vendors didn't have the privilege of making use of.

## Concluding Thoughts

This chapter has attempted to re-position street vending in Naples as part of the creative horizontal logic of getting by, *un arte di arrangiarsi*, in a context of radical joblessness. In the first part of the chapter I explored the discourses about street vending that I came across in the field. This involved looking at the ways in which my research participants defended their work politically, and contrasting that with the kinds of ideological arguments mobilised against street vending, and the impact that other sorts of street hustling have on the life of the market. In the second part of the chapter I talked about the ways in which the horizontal dynamics of street vending were coded and enacted through particular cultural languages (Hewitt 1998, p.8) which aimed to ease trade whilst also opening up the possibilities for other sorts of transcultural negotiation and solidarity. I presented greetings and humour, barter in Neapolitan, barter in English and *sapé fà* collectively as sub-genres of market cries, a speech genre that enabled people to make money through a tactical understanding of the particular context and condition in which they spoke.

These market cries have ancient origins but there is now a new community of vendors who are creating a language of cultural communication in markets out of the resources available to them. Struggles over power can be understood by looking at the struggles going on within signification (Hewitt 1998, p.98). The struggles reveal both the external struggle affecting the livelihoods of vendors, and the internal power struggles that reflect the unequal statuses and gendered, racialised positionalities of people making money on the pavement. Through this examination of market cries, as they are defined and also practiced, I have tried to show that the history of lumpen suffering and hustling connects the Neapolitan and Senegalese hawker both in the ambiguously unequal forms of transcultural collaboration that take place on the pavement, as well as in a shared history of choicelessness, movement and hope. I say hope because street vending as a survival strategy cannot work if it doesn't base itself on trusting that the Other will come through for you on some level, be they a loyal customer, a helpful colleague, or an understanding passer-by. Instead of differentiating between different sorts of market trade, it is more important to highlight the commonalities, in terms of fluid shifts between the formal and informal, that make a hawker selling silk ties similar to a Senegalese vendor of fake handbags, a regulated market trader selling Chinese-made socks, or a purveyor of luxury leatherwear. The legality, semi-legality or illegality of what they are doing is unimportant. Firstly, because it's almost impossible to draw clear lines between these different categories. Secondly, because the choices my research participants made need to be understood as quasi-political strategies that make some space for material and spiritual survival in a situation where, as Bauman (2005) describes it, they have been cast off as human waste.

In the following four chapters I move away from the everyday practice of money-making to describe the other sorts of everyday intersubjective sociality that take place in

Neapolitan street markets and on public transport connecting people with each other across the city.

## Chapter Five: Banter and Catcalling on Neapolitan Pavements

Io nun capisco 'e vvote che succere	I don't understand what's going on these days
E chello ca se vere nun se crere.	And you wouldn't believe it either.
È nato nu criaturo, è nato niro,	A baby was born. He was born black.
E 'a mamma 'o chiamma gGiro,	And his Mum calls him Ciro,
Sissignore, 'o chiamma gGiro.	Yessir, she calls him Ciro.
Seh, vota e gira, seh	You can twist it and turn it,
Seh, vota e gira, seh	Twist it and turn it how you like,
Ca tu 'o chiamme Ciccio 'o Ntuono,	Whether you call him Ciccio or Antonio,
Ca tu 'o chiamme Peppe 'o gGiro,	Whether you call him Peppe or Ciro
Chillo 'o fatto è niro niro, niro niro comm'a cche.	It's black times we're in, as black as can be.

Verse 1 and chorus of *Tammuriata Nera*<sup>15</sup> written by E.A. Mario (music) and Edoardo Nicolardi (lyrics) in 1944 (translated from Neapolitan by the author).

The extract from the *Tammuriata Nera*, reproduced above, speaks of the birth of a mixed race child to a Neapolitan woman and an African American Allied soldier following the Italian surrender in 1943. The writer Curzio Malaparte spent time in the city after 1943 and described his experiences in a book called *La Pelle* (2010 (1952)). He talked at length about the unions between local women and black GIs in a chapter of *La Pelle* called 'The Plague'. As Pezzarossa has argued (2013), the story of these children is part of the hidden history of race relations and racism in Italy, that didn't just go away with the birth of the new republic, and is connected to the ways in which

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<sup>15</sup> 'Tammuriata' means the drumming of tambourines, which are the rhythmic base of this traditional southern Italian folk genre. 'Nera' obviously means black.

migrants are treated in Italy today. The hunger and poverty that followed the city's self-liberation from German occupation led many Neapolitans to rely on help and favours from members of the Allied Forces to survive. In many cases relationships flourished between local girls and American troops that had both sentiment and economic need at their base. In the popular imaginary the shame of this desperation became encapsulated in the ultimate symbol of forbidden transcultural contact: a black birth to a white woman. The *Tammuriata Nera* is performed today at urban concerts and village *feste* and is extremely popular amongst young people who, in their rush to re-evoke the nostalgia of folk pride and wartime deprivations – deprivations that they perhaps recognise in their own lack of prospects in the south – refuse to acknowledge the hurtful implications of the lyrics. James Senese (born Gaetano) is a Neapolitan Blues musician and is one of that generation of war children. He summed it up best in a YouTube video in which he asked: '*how should she (the child's mother) call him then?*'.

In his ethnography of Neapolitan street markets, Sarnelli noted that the collective memory of post WW2 deprivations impacted upon the joking practices that took place between Senegalese and Neapolitan street vendors in his fieldwork. The Senegalese men played a practical joke on the Neapolitans where they pretended to kidnap and sell a white woman and, often, older Neapolitan men refused to join in as they were reminded of the children born to local girls and black GIs during the war (2003, p.44). I didn't see this particular joke being carried out whilst I was doing fieldwork, but I was very aware of the ways in which the history of the *Tammuriata Nera* acted as a backdrop to the kinds of transcultural interactions I was both witnessing and, very often, directly implicated within. The tale of subjugation and miscegenation was part of the context of wounded masculine pride in the city and had an important effect on the ways in which Neapolitan men interacted with migrant men and women in streets, piazze and

other public spaces around the city. Episodes of consensual and non-consensual policing of pavement interactions were an undercurrent in many of the economic interactions of street markets, as described in the last chapter. But tensions surrounding interactions between black men and white women were a dominant feature of the moments of downtime amongst street vendors that occurred in between customers and on quiet days. In this chapter I address these kinds of everyday socialisation of the pavement in more detail.

This following is an example of where the echo of the *Tammuriata Nera* could be felt in contemporary interactions in Naples:

One late Sunday afternoon I was standing with Modou on the pavement next to his stall. The designer wares glimmered in the light of a street lamp, set off by the white sheet arranged in a neat rectangle at our feet. It was cold and there weren't many people about so I did notice the intense look sent our way by two Neapolitan men as they passed by. I pointed it out to Modou and we both laughed, imitating the stare we had received. It was only later, when I was at home transcribing the recordings made during the afternoon, that I realised the significance of this look. This is what I heard on the digital recorder:

**Me:** I need to go to the bathroom.

**Modou:** Ok.

**Me:** I'll just go to the bar... I'll leave everything here.

**Modou:** Ok!

**(I leave and a few seconds pass by)**

**Voice of Neapolitan Man:** *So is that your stuff?*

**Modou:** No... she – England.

**Voice of Neapolitan Man:** *Oh ok. So that's not your stuff then?*

**Modou:** No, no...

Unlike English, Romance languages such as Italian and Neapolitan do not require a subject pronoun to indicate who is doing the action of the verb. The gender of the surrounding nouns and adjectives in the phrase, as well as the context of discussion, generally make the meaning clear to the speakers involved. Here, 'is that' was a translation of 'è', the third person conjugation of the verb 'to be'. The object of the sentence was 'stuff' or 'roba', a feminine noun. On the surface the Neapolitan man could easily have been asking about the wares on Modou's stall; but Modou's response unequivocally demonstrated that he understood the man was talking about me. He was asking if I was Modou's woman, and Modou was very keen to emphasise that I was not. Moreover he let them know that I was not local, but a foreigner whom they had lesser claims over.

The next time I saw Modou I asked him if he remembered who the men were and what they meant by 'your stuff'. Modou said he had no recollection of the exchange. Marco, a middle-aged Neapolitan friend of Modou, was hanging out nearby and overheard our discussion. He confirmed that the disembodied voice on the recording was most probably talking about me and, looking at me curiously, asking if I was offended. I told him that I wasn't but this was interesting for my research project. He became defensive, saying he couldn't see why it was interesting. He told me it was, 'normal for Neapolitans to act that way' and gave me an example of something else that had happened between himself and Modou. One time he had come to say hi to Modou and found him chatting to a Neapolitan woman. He playfully hit Modou and the woman

said, ‘*leave him alone or I’ll have ya*’. He asked her if she was his girlfriend and she replied that she wasn’t.

I have already argued that the local context of sexual conventions, practices and systems in Naples is part of the historic social organisation of Mediterranean societies (Gilmore 1982; Harding 1975; Reiter 1975; Silverman 1975). I broke the rules of these sexual conventions, as a young single woman hanging out on the edge of a city pavement on a quiet Sunday night, revealing the persistent trace of a ‘sexual contract’ whereby women are not allowed to be part of the public sphere and are incorporated into civil society within the private sphere only as objects of sexual exchange (Pateman 1988, p.11). The fierce protectiveness and possessiveness demonstrated by the Neapolitan man talking to Modou was part of a particular historical trajectory in Naples, and elsewhere in the Mediterranean, to do with poverty and tensions over limited resources which get displaced onto the idea of male honour and female shame, as Gilmore’s research has shown (1982, p.191). Of course public spaces in Naples are increasingly fluid and contested today and women are now part of the hegemonic heteronormativity of the pavement. However, they enter into public space with certain caveats. They must consent to dress modestly and only go out alone during the daytime. Above all women must be careful about who they are seen interacting with. Whilst I was doing fieldwork in the city I dressed differently to how I would in London, wearing mostly jeans, baggy trousers and long skirts. I also rarely went out alone at night and was often accompanied home by a male friend.

The fraught exchange set off by Modou and I standing together on the pavement also testified to the ways in which racialisation processes were implicated within the code of conduct established by the sexual contract. This needs to be understood as connected to

locally-situated ideas about belonging and entitlement which have sprung from colonial stereotypes about black men, the painful legacy of southern Italian subordination, and the wounded history of the *Tammuriata Nera*. This history is re-evoked by the sight of interracial interaction and, potentially, desire between white women and black men in Naples today. Pateman has noted that interracial desire is prohibited because women are supposed to be objects of exchange between white men. She has argued that the interconnections between the social contract, the sexual contract and the slave contract are the lasting legacy of modernity (1988, pp.77, 281). Neapolitan masculinities have also gone through a complex history of subordination within the nation which has generated particular sorts of differential local masculinities (Connel and Messeschmidt 2005, pp.845-47) and attendant exercises in gendered domination. In order to understand how paranoias about racialised sexualities and differential forms of masculinity work together around the Ferrovia, it is necessary to unpick how sexual conventions are interdependent with the relations of production that produce the politics and economics of social life in the city. The Neapolitan 'political economy of sexual systems' (Rubin 1975, p.177) cannot be understood separately from the ambiguous and unequal dynamics of getting by, discussed in the last chapter, in which ideas about women in street markets and migrant vendors figure strongly. As Mbembe has argued, the effects of constantly living with economic insability and cultural subordination are felt in the forms of violent gendered, sexualised and racialised control that is exercised by wounded masculinities. Of course sexual violence exists in all cultures and social groups. But, as I show, the kinds of brutalisation that result from chronic instability and insecurity engender forms of forced community separation that are a key part of intersubjective and transcultural interaction amongst unemployed and underemployed men in Neapolitan street markets today (Mbembe 2001, pp.13-15).

The anthropological literature on community separation in the Mediterranean (Harding 1975; Reiter 1975) states that language is a key tool for producing and perpetuating the local sexual contract. In the case of the contract being disobeyed, ‘sexual preserves’ are maintained through joking (Reiter 1975, p.258) and the sexual division of ‘verbal roles’ – distinct topics of talk and the practice of maintaining secrecy amongst men or gossiping amongst women (Harding 1975). As Passerini’s (1987, pp.67-126) work on verbal comedy under fascism has shown, humourous language functions both as a challenge to, and in complicity with, power. As Smitherman has also shown (1977; 2006; 2007), humour can be used to silence and oppress but it also gives agency and permits stress release between subordinated groups of people. Bakhtin’s material-bodily principle is additionally useful to me for understanding the ambivalent interconnections between joking and power. He claims that abusive and comic language, which refers to the grotesque digestive and reproductive functions of the human body, makes space for partial, improvisational and incomplete forms of social transformation (1984, pp.20-27). In the above episode a crude jokey warning given to Modou in dialect about ‘stuff’ and the ownership of women’s bodies served to re-establish a localised Neapolitan male power that was lacking in other spheres of life. As mentioned elsewhere in the thesis, the use of dialect often corresponded to a masculine gangster or ‘guappo’ stereotype and so was used between men as a form of posturing, aggression and intimidation. Marco insisted that there was something particularly Neapolitan about the response to our presence together, and provided an example of how he himself had taken part in a similar moment of jokey sexual policing between Modou and another white woman. This was revelatory of the ways in which both complicity and oppression worked side by side in the local hierarchy of masculinities in Neapolitan street markets.

I am conceptualising the multiaccentual comic and abusive language that aliments the political economy of sexual conventions of the Neapolitan pavement in two ways. The first part of this chapter explores episodes of banter about sex, women and football, as well as the verbalised aggression and playfighting, that took place *between men* across racialised boundaries in the street market environments I worked in. As Hewitt notes, banter is a key element of competitive joking interactions amongst men, and serves to challenge, complain, mask embarrassment, undermine others and self-celebrate. It evokes and establishes masculine imageries and makes space for ritualised insults to take place within a playful context where things are not really meant and so cannot usually escalate out of control (1998, pp.170-187). The second part of the chapter explores the catcalling which Neapolitan men meted out to women and interracial couples on the pavement. Catcalling is different from banter in that its expressions of derision and disapproval can more clearly be seen as forms of harassment and silencing that are non-consensual and violent (see Ayim 1997 and Kissling 1991). I demonstrate that, during my fieldwork, these interconnected speech genres worked together in order to police particular forms of hegemonic community separation, which were cut through by race and racism, and as part of displays of gendered control on the part of Neapolitan men.

## Banter

Grotesque and darkly funny banter about sex, women, football and play-fighting, played an important role in the constitution of local hierarchies of masculinity on the pavement in Naples. These verbal styles and ritualistic games produced gender, through markers of race, ethnicity and class. They also formed the social space of the pavement around notions of morality, kinship and economic entitlement that both challenged and

bolstered the political economy of sexual conventions in the city (Rubin 1975, p.177).

The improvisational and ambivalent characteristic of these interactions made space for different sorts of togetherness and rubbing along. These occurred in public space but extended into the domestic sphere. Everyday events were linked to both extreme violence and prospective intimacies on a mobile continuum.

### Banter about Sex

At quiet moments of the day Ibra, Salvatore and Mimmo liked to hang out together next to Ibra's stall and banter with each other. The Neapolitan men often accused Ibra and his Senegalese colleagues of leading incomplete lives, far from their families and thinking only of work and sleep. Ibra would usually retort that, 'Italians all get cheated on. Just smoke. Just eat, eat. Just screw.' Usually he would start cracking up towards the end of such diatribes and scarper away from the Neapolitans' exaggerated expressions of offense and raised fists. He would never retaliate physically.

The three men's dispute around screwing, or doing the 'fiki fiki' as they called it, revolved around the physical and moral structuring of their masculinities. Mimmo proudly told Ibra that, 'yes! Italian man eat three times a day and do fiki fiki three times a day!' Ibra responded that this weakened a man and led to his death. To illustrate this he wove around the Neapolitan men, limping, to illustrate their physical debilitation through excessive coitus. Salvatore then explained to me, at length, that male virility actually originated in the knees and if men didn't have enough sex they would weaken themselves at the skeletal level. To this he attributed the Neapolitan phrase: *sta camminan' c'a cosc' spezzat'* (He's walking around with smashed limbs)<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> I haven't been able to find anyone else familiar with this saying.

For the Neapolitan men it was incomprehensible that the married migrant men sincerely intended to wait for their wives in Senegal:

**Salvatore: (to Ibra)** When are you gonna have sex? In ten years time?

**Mimmo:** Why don't you take an Italian woman?

**Ibra:** Italian woman not the same.

**Mimmo: (offended)** why's that?

**Salvatore:** Look. In life it's important to eat, work and do fiki fiki. But you just work and eat!

**Ibra: (smiles)** Look I'm Muslim. We can't do sex outside of marriage.

**Salvatore:** I think Ibra is gay... Ibra, you gay?

Ibra ignored him and went to re-organise some of the hats on his stall. Carlo came over to stand behind his bent form, holding his waist.

**Mimmo:** Ibra be careful when you bend over or else I'll whip you!

**Ibra jumps up in shock and anger, moving out of Mimmo's reach.**

**Mimmo: (regretfully)** *look how pissed he gets!* Come back Ibra! **(to me)** Ibra gets so angry when we joke with him like that... even if we just walk around behind him... he gets angry and says "Carlo! Don't do that! You no good!" **(Mimmo shrugs and goes back into his shop)**

**Salvatore:** You're wrong Ibra. It's normal to have sex.

**Ibra:** Look. It's fine.

**Salvatore: (to me)** Other Senegalese friends of mine tell me that when they go home to visit all they do is have sex. They go back to make a son they never see. It's not right.

**Me: (trying to calm things down)** How is your son Ibra? Is he still doing well in school?

**Ibra:** All good thanks, all good.

**Salvatore: (to Samba, a Senegalese street vendor who has just arrived)** Do you like Italian women?

**Samba: (holding up his hands)** I'm Muslim. I can't do illegal sex.

We all laughed because Samba had a reputation as a bit of a womaniser and had previously spent an afternoon trying to convince me to go clubbing with him.

A number of key themes emerged in the men's bantering about sex. Firstly, it was made clear that ideal Italian or Senegalese masculinities were produced through the way men were seen to exercise their sexuality. Male prowess was constructed alternatively through the practice of regular intercourse or the exercise of self-control, discipline and restraint. This second vision of masculinity was connected to the Islamic principles that governed relationships between men and women. Catholic dogma did not form a counterpart to the argument the Senegalese men made about 'illegal sex'. Instead, the Neapolitan men made use of hegemonic ideals about the virile family man, a stereotype that emerged under fascism (Giuliani 2013, p.263; Proglio 2013, p.325; Ruspini 2009; Sabelli 2013, p.288), as a way of accusing the Senegalese migrants of not fulfilling their manly duties within the family by being away from home.

As the performance of hegemonic masculinities involved exercising the male right to exchange of women as sexual objects (Pateman 1988; Rubin 1975), then the Neapolitan men offered local women as an alternative to the lack of locally-available Senegalese women. However, historically inflected stereotypes about black masculinity as brutal and sexually threatening to the virtue of white women made this offer highly

ambiguous. Both Ibra and Samba negotiated this by explaining that sex outside of marriage was ‘*harām*’, forbidden, to them. In so doing they re-asserted their own vision of masculinity against the Neapolitan one. The response of the Neapolitans was to emasculate them further by accusing them of being gay. Such ritualised insults served to undermine and intimidate Senegalese men along the pavement by putting them in the difficult position of having to prove a heterosexual masculinity whilst avoiding the sceptre of miscegenation.

I witnessed numerous episodes like the one recounted above between Salvatore, Mimmo and Ibra. As time went on, I began to feel that Salvatore and Mimmo were putting on a show for me and I was witnessing the same, depressing performance of masculine dominance over and over again. In many ways it was unusual that Salvatore and Mimmo felt comfortable with sharing this kind of highly sexualised information with me, as their conceptualisation of respectable femininity, discussed more below, did not fit with me being made into ‘one of the boys’. One particular event convinced me that these discussions about sex were actually attempts to seduce or intimidate me. I had taken a photo of Ibra with Giovanni in front Giovanni’s shop and Salvatore asked to look at it. He told me I should make copies of it and plaster my bathroom wall with it.

On another afternoon, a few months after the episode recounted above a Neapolitan woman walked past Ibra’s stall wearing bright pink leopard print leggings and a tight black top. Salvatore commented to me, ‘look how all the blacks are watching her.’ A young Senegalese street vendor, who had temporarily set up a stall in Samba’s usual spot, made a face at Salvatore and, indicating Ibra who had lowered his gaze as the women passed by, pulled on his left earlobe with his index finger and thumb. This Neapolitan gesture can be translated as ‘Ibra is ‘*ricchione*’’ (homophobic term for gay

men). Both men laughed and Salvatore commented, ‘all the men are looking, except Ibra. Ibra doesn’t look at women. Ibra doesn’t do fiki fiki.’ The young Senegalese man came over to continue bantering with Salvatore and Salvatore asked him, ‘do you like women?’ The young man looked awkward and started saying, ‘nooo’ hesitantly. Salvatore immediately snapped back with ‘so you’re...’ – starting to lift his hand to his left ear. The young man quickly responded, ‘ok yes!’ Salvatore congratulated him and they both laughed amicably.

As I explained above, during these threatening incidents, the Neapolitan men often accused the Senegalese men of being gay. In the first episode detailed above Mimmo took things further and physically grabbed hold of Ibra whilst he was bent over, threatening to punish him, ostensibly by raping him. The rape of a straight man by a straight man constituted a more complex form of control than if Mimmo were gay or Ibra were a woman. The combination of abusive language and physical intimidation served to reinforce the kind of socio-sexual pact Mimmo was seeking to preserve and perpetuate on the pavement. Mimmo’s actions were revelatory of the ways in which humour can be used to dominate and threaten vulnerable people, thus re-establishing hegemonic hierarchies of control and social order. But Mimmo and Salvatore also occupied subaltern masculinities, as working class Neapolitan men with insecure jobs. Salvatore once mentioned to me that he was careful to avoid being cast as a Neapolitan thief, particularly by the passing tourists who often asked him for directions. He also spoke about the lack of security in his job, and the fact that other doormen were losing their positions and businesses were failing in the economic climate. The Neapolitan men’s aggressively comedic sending up of the Senegalese vendors served to ease the tensions created by their own vulnerable positionalities and difficult working lives, but at the cost of men in an even more vulnerable position (Mbembe 2001, pp.13-15).

## Banter about Women

When women were not present they were conjured up through the banter between men about each other's wives and womenfolk. This allowed the men to explore ideal types of feminine behaviour within a heteronormative social order that was trying to come to terms with the fact of migration and diversity. One of the first things that Salvatore told me about Ibra was, 'do you know that Ibra has four wives?' Ibra crossly told us, 'it's not true!' but smiled to show he wasn't really angry. Salvatore turned to me and told me that it was true that, 'these Senegalese men have more than one wife.' Salvatore's jokey banter about polygamy highlighted the different sexual roles within Islamic and Judaeo-Christian custom as part of an attempt to embarrass Ibra but without meaning to be overly offensive. Neither man got particularly angry with each other during this exchange because the talk of women as exchange limited the possibilities of exchange within different fraternities: Senegalese men or Neapolitan men. Salvatore didn't seem to consider that a local woman could be the object of exchange within a polygamous union which he clearly saw as an exotic and foreign practice. Ibra accepted polygamy as a customary part of social life back home and so didn't find the idea of four wives offensive per se. As he knew the realities of polygamy through lived experience, he was able to laugh off Salvatore's exaggerated exoticisation of the practice.

Of course the fact of my being there to witness such discussions problematised the comic and abusive exchanges taking place. One day I went to do some fieldwork at Via Bologna market. It was raining and I found Gennaro, Serigne and Riccardo chatting together in Riccardo's shop. At one point in the discussion, conversation turned to relationships and the games men play to avoid having to commit themselves. Riccardo offered the example of a teacher he once knew – a committed bachelor – who used to

say, ‘if I want a glass of milk why do I have to buy the cow?’ The men cracked up laughing and Gennaro commented, ‘that really hits the nail on the head!’ It was only at this point that they noticed my pained expression. Gennaro told me that women had only one sin: that of having betrayed Adam. Serigne nodded in approval and Gennaro commented that even Serigne, as a Muslim, knew this was the truth<sup>17</sup>. Then the men started telling me how amazing their women folk were. Gennaro told me that there was nothing as beautiful as the connection between two partners and recalled how his wife had had a sixth sense about various situations he had been in over the years that had saved him literally from ruin. Riccardo told me he had a son and a daughter. His son had a degree and worked as an engineer. His daughter was a housewife but she was much sharper than his son. ‘I vote women’ he told me, making a fist with his right hand and raising his arm in the air. They then started to joke about the difficulties of talking to women. Gennaro said that men could never say the right thing in an argument, whether they talked or remained silent. But he thought a woman’s silence could be terrible, and her anger even worse. He talked about how his wife changed the channel after the football so he couldn’t hear the post-match commentary. He stated that women ruled in the home and they were tough, even though it didn’t always seem so. Gennaro then commented that African wives were more oppressed. He told us that his friend Moussa had told him they beat their women in Africa to keep them under control. Riccardo disagreed, saying that whatever it looked like from the outside, the women were always in charge. He opined that the mistake women had always made was to spend so many years hidden behind their men. Serigne interjected to say that it wasn’t true that all African men beat their wives. Gennaro responded that his friend Moussa told him; he didn’t make it up himself.

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<sup>17</sup> Although, of course, in Islam there is no concept of original sin.

The banter between Gennaro, Riccardo and Serigne in the above episode served to explore the possibilities of a general consensus about the role of women in relationship to men. In trying to justify Riccardo's misogynistic joke about milking cows they only further clarified a series of stereotypes about women as wives, belonging in the home and existing only in relationship to their husbands. This reflects both Pateman's (1988) and Rubin's (1975) arguments about women as objects of sexual exchange between men. In doing so they integrated historical beliefs and cultural practices that were both profane and sacred, formed of the interconnection of ancient forms of patriarchy, Abrahamic religion and the transformations that have come about in the relationship between public and private, self and other, from modernity onwards. They playfully joked about the limits of the power that men had over women, with Gennaro positioning African husbands as more violent as part of a racialised distinction between white male civility and black male savagery. When Serigne challenged him, Gennaro denied responsibility for his comments by stating that an African friend had told him these things, so they must be true. Their banter established a local sexual order where communities did not meet across racialised boundaries outside of the public sphere of the street market. At home each man was ostensibly in charge of family life and the types of control he chose to exercise there were reflective of the differential statuses of particular racialised and culturally-inflected masculinity. My presence, in itself disruptive of local sexual conventions, forced them to justify the things they were saying but didn't effectively dismantle the ways in which they spoke about women and their social position in regards to men.

## Banter about Football



Figure 20: Shrine to Diego Armando Maradona, photo by author (March 2012)

Football was an important source of shared passion, celebration and dispute between many of the men I came across in Naples, both migrants and Neapolitans, in and out of markets. Women also watched matches but were not so often heard engaging in aggressive sports banter with fellow men or women, as in the episode below:

**Modou: (to Carlo) Juventina, Juventina!**

**Carlo:** You're an Interista!

**Modou:** No, when the final comes I swear I'm supporting Inter.

**Carlo:** So you've converted then?

**Modou:** For the final, yes!

**Carlo: (to me)** Basically if the final is with Napoli he will support Inter.

**Me:** Oh!

**Modou:** But I really am an Inter fan... But when Napoli plays I always support the other team.

**Carlo:** Yeah – you always support the other team.

**Me:** I get it.

**Carlo:** He is really saying that when a team plays against Napoli, whatever team it is, he supports them (**shakes his head**).

**We all laugh and Carlo pretends to hit Modou whilst he backs away, laughing.**

**Me:** I think I'll just support both and try to keep my head down.

**Modou:** Catania, ooh ooh! (**the last game was Catania-Napoli**)

**Carlo:** Seeing as he is in Naples and we feed him... Because if he doesn't sell he doesn't eat... Can you tell me why –

**Modou:** Napoli never! (**laughing**)

**Carlo:** Why don't you go to Milan? Go all the way to Milan!

**Modou:** I always sell to Milanesi.

**Carlo:** He only sells to foreigners

**Me:** I have seen the opposite, I have to say!

**Carlo:** He only has Neapolitan customers?

**Modou:** No!

...

**Modou:** But you're a Manchester fan.

**Carlo:** What's that got to do with anything?! Look I... ok. I could accept that you were a Manchester fan but not you living here and supporting Milan! I mean when someone from... Peru supports – what's it called – Uruguay, I can accept that they are far away... But no! You're in Naples and you support Milan. How is that?!

**Modou laughs.**

**Carlo:** You really are good for nothing!

...

**Me:** (to Modou) Have you ever lived in Milan?

**Carlo:** No!

**Me:** So...

**Modou:** No I've been there!

**Carlo:** And what did you do there?

**Modou:** I've been there many times.

**Modou:** How many years did you live there?

**Modou:** Many! Four or five years ago.

**Carlo:** Whatever! You've not been there for more than a day!

**Me:** I guess it's all choices.

**Carlo:** How many years have you been in Naples?

...

**Me:** Really, Modou, you can't support Siena! (**the next games Napoli is playing**)

**Carlo:** Or Catania.

**Me:** But Catania is still the South.

**Carlo:** Yes, it's still South. He was all like "hey fool! You're gonna lose!" (**before the Napoli-Catania game**) But when Catania lost he sure kept his head down! **(laughter)**

...

**Carlo:** Say "*Forza Napoli!*"

**Modou:** Forza Napoli!

**Me:** Mamma mia!

Robeson's ethnographic work on Millwall fandom in the London Docklands argues that the 'specific ecologies' of portside cities has generated 'archetypal representations of masculinity' which are informed by support for the local football club (2000, p.41). Local support for the team in Naples is fervent, devoted and, occasionally, joyfully unruly. This manifests through particular classed phenomena, particularly amongst men. Loyalty to the team is connected to the particular forms of regional pride and masculinity that have come about as a result of Unification and attendant process of political, economic and cultural degradation. When the team wins, illegal firework displays light up the night sky above the city's poor neighbourhoods. When the team loses, the streets of the city centre are silent with grief and handwritten signs are put up in bars asking people to, 'kindly do not mention the game.' These displays of collective emotion shape the life of the street and how people move around the city. The above photo, hung outside a bar in the historic centre, illustrates the playfulness and the passion of Napoli fans. It is a shrine to the legendary Napoli player, Diego Armando Maradona. In the framed image at the bottom of the shrine is written 'Holy Year 1987', which was the year Maradona brought Naples to victory in the championship for the first time ever. A small phial of liquid is in a blue case in the bottom right corner and the written caption says it contains the tears of the Neapolitan people shed in 1994, when Maradona was disqualified from the World Cup after testing positive for drugs.

However many of the migrant street vendors I worked with didn't support Napoli but were fans of three of the big northern Italian teams: Milan, Juventus or Inter. Like Modou they all enjoyed aggressive and comic bantering with Napoli fans about the successes and failures of their respective teams. In the above episode, Modou took things even further and informed Carlo that he would support any team as long as they played against Napoli. For Carlo it was already an ultimate act of disloyalty that Modou

could choose to support a northern Italian team when it was Naples that seemingly clothed and fed him. He thought that Modou was only entitled to benefit from the city's economy if he contributed to upholding the local culture by supporting the team. This was revelatory of the ways in which local politics and economics were interdependent with gendered and racialised attitudes about intersubjective relations, including particular sorts of locally-specific performances of masculinity. Modou absolutely rejected Carlo's arguments, stating that he made more money off tourists and owed the city nothing. The ritualistic and repetitive nature of such exchanges of football-themed insults were a way in which migrant men established forms of fraternity with Neapolitan men they encountered during their working day, but on their own terms. Some Senegalese men I spoke to explained that the northern teams employed more black players so they felt greater loyalty towards them. Others criticised the corruption and match-fixing that was said to go on in Neapolitan football particularly, and so refused to support the team in the same way that many migrants avoid speaking Neapolitan dialect: because they know it is associated with criminality and cultural backwardness. I didn't do a comprehensive survey amongst the migrant men I worked with or knew in Naples, but I got the impression that those who had close Neapolitan friendships with people who they socialised with regularly in their free time – away from public spaces and the verbally-aggressive banter of the pavement – were more likely to have been invited to matches and so encouraged to form a greater sense of belonging to the cultural life of the city, including supporting the local team.

## Verbal Aggression and Playfighting



Figure 21: Giuseppe and Christopher at work, photo by author (April 2012)

Alessandro and Christopher, who Alessandro called Cristiano, have known each other for about five years, since Christopher settled in Naples after arriving in Lampedusa as refugee. He is originally from Togo and worked occasionally on Alessandro's stall on Sundays whilst I was doing fieldwork. At quiet moments the two men liked to verbally and physically duel with each other. Their playful and competitive interactions with each other illustrated the contentious performance of an urban male wit that was being hierarchically fought over.

On one occasion I arrived and Alessandro told me that earlier in the morning Christopher had challenged him to an arm-wrestling contest. He asked me whom I thought had won. I suggested that Alessandro had, from the way he was asking me and he confirmed this, telling me that Christopher even wanted to bet five euros on the contest but now didn't want to pay up. He wanted to take it out of his wages but Christopher wouldn't let him. '*You no good!*' Alessandro told him, imitating the

syntactical style of many migrant speakers of Italian. The two men grappled with each other for a few minutes, laughing all the time. Christopher then picked up the bag hook from the back of the stall and pretended it was a guitar whilst singing gospel songs. Alessandro looked at me quizzically and asked me, ‘what do you think of this guy?’ I responded that he seemed to be into his Pentecostalism. Alessandro was astounded to discover that if Christopher weren’t working on his stall right now he would be in a four-hour church service. Christopher then told Alessandro he made CDs and occasionally worked as a DJ in bars in the town where he lived. Alessandro responded by telling him: ‘bring me your CD. Do you know where I’ll play it? In the bog.’ Christopher laughed and responded that, ‘God doesn’t appreciate your words’. He told Alessandro to invite him to come and play next time he had a party. ‘What will you play?’ Alessandro asks. ‘Italian music... pa pa l’Americano. Pa pa pa! Alessandro’s no good! Pa pa pa! Alessandro’s so rich!’ intoned Christopher, to the tune of the house hit *We no Speak Americano* (see Chapter Six, p.236). We all laughed at this comic display but Alessandro became a bit insulted by Christopher’s comment about him being wealthy and insisted that he wasn’t rich and, in any rate, he felt it was more important to be healthy than rich. He asked me if I agreed with him and Christopher cut back that he would rather be rich than healthy. Alessandro sniffed and told him, ‘ok when you’re very rich you can come and spend all your little coins at my stall.’

The next week I came to do fieldwork and Christopher was working with Alessandro again. Alessandro asked Christopher to change five euros for him and, when he took too long fumbling with the coins, Alessandro thumped him on the arm, shouting: ‘quickly!’ Christopher handed over two euros and then Alessandro raised a fist to his face shouting: ‘now!’ Christopher identified three more euros from his fistful of change and handed them over. Alessandro turned to me and told me, ‘this man is much too

interested in money'. Christopher looked down, avoiding eye contact. I didn't see him again at the stall after that and Alessandro told me he had stopped showing up. He didn't explain why but I suspected that he was fed up with the atmosphere on the stall and decided that it wasn't worth missing church and spending money on travel anymore.

Episodes of verbal and physical aggression were a feature of other market stalls I spent time at. The Neapolitan man who sold CDs opposite Ku's electronics stall near Via Bologna liked to play the game of pretending to steal Ku's merchandise and run off with it. As discussed in the last chapter, this is a common practical joke played between Neapolitan men and Senegalese street vendors in Naples and forms part of the displays of domination performed by Neapolitan men in public spaces in the city (Sarnelli 2003, p.51) Ku never reacted so the man was always forced to bring the items back and abandon the game. On one occasion he approached Ku's stall for a second time that morning only to walk right up to him and pull gently and purposely on the hairs of his beard that he had not been able to shave because he had fallen and needed stitches on his chin.

Ideas about economic entitlement often circulated through the ritualistic fights I saw in the field. Who earned more money, who deserved more, and the value of things were interwoven with the local political economy of sexual conventions and ideas about race and masculinity. Class and economic precariousness tied together the fates of Neapolitan and migrant men working on street markets in a differential hierarchy where playfulness revealed widespread gendered domination and an explicit threat of constantly lurking violence. Alessandro's desire to physically overpower Christopher reflected common-sense stereotypes about black male strength and the risk black men

pose to social order through the threat of miscegenation with white women. Ku's colleague pulled on his whiskers to highlight his lack of facial hair and, by correlation, surplus of feminine qualities. This is an important way in which East Asian masculinity has been portrayed historically. The Neapolitan men I worked with were also conscious of their own ethnic and classed subordination as southern Italian men with no qualifications and precarious livelihoods. This was clear particularly from Alessandro's comments about the relative values of wealth and good health, and the aggressive way he responded to Christopher's assertion that he wanted to be rich. The cultural language of aggressive banter and playfighting formed the linguistic backdrop of struggles over power between men in Naples. Playfighting was a form of ritualised aggression that was, in part, unmeant, allowing for interracially shared knowledge about the masculine codes of the pavement to be ridiculed and exorcised (Hewitt 1998, pp.237-8). However the ambiguous jokey-ness of such abusive-comic behavior often crossed the line, to become an outright display of Neapolitan male power and domination.

## Catcalling

In Naples, comic and abusive language was a key way in which men exercised sexual control against women in street markets. Setting up market stalls alongside predominantly male street vendors, or simply stopping to buy some goods whilst passing along the city's pavements, carried particular risks for women who were seen to be challenging established social codes about the gendered partition of public spaces. Unlike the ambivalent nature of banter between men explored in the first part of the chapter, this genre of speaking practice, or catcalling, functioned for the most part as an explicit form of silencing, violence and domination (Ayim 1997; Kissling 1991). There was very little space for the victims to challenge their aggressor and the witty back and

forth of banter – through fraught with hostility and differential power dynamics as shown above – did not really take place. It was still, however, very amusing for the men involved in doing the catcalling. The kinds of consensus, both on the part of male and female witnesses, within which this humour found a receptive home, was revelatory of the ways in which power functioned through both hegemonic acceptance and the use of violence.

Whilst it was mostly Neapolitan men who were doing the catcalling, attitudes about appropriate feminine behaviour – which were cut through with ideologies about race – were not confined to them. For example, Modou once commented to me that Neapolitan women walked in a way that was provocative and deliberately sensuous. He told me: ‘all they think about is sex.’ Catcalls mostly sought to police and maintain a sexual contract that was heteronormatively heterosexual, but not exclusively. The catcalling of migrant men by Neapolitan gay men, who would not have been so bold as to harass straight Neapolitans, highlighted the vulnerability of migrant men within the local political economy, and the racialised dynamics of gendered control. The fact that gay Neapolitan men were still more empowered than migrant men also reveals a really important truth about the forms that gendered violence takes when cut through with race and class. Finally, in their most threatening manifestation catcalls were directed against instances of interracial desire, which were seen to pose the biggest threat to social order and Neapolitan male power.

### Catcalling Passers-by

As Kissling notes, sexual harassment in the street is pretty much a universal phenomenon (1991, p.451). In Naples it manifested in particular ways that were revelatory of local sociolinguistic and cultural dynamics. For example men hissed at

women as they passed by, ‘pssss’, in the same way as people in Italy attract the attention of cats. They made reference to the woman’s looks, calling out ‘*hey blondie*’ or ‘*hey curly*’. They formed an assumption about where a girl was from, particularly if she appeared foreign, and called out, ‘*hey Polish*’ or ‘*hey German*’, as often happened to me. Northern and Eastern femininities were particularly prized for their light colouring and supposed sexual openness. As Dines has noted, Neapolitan men are known to hang out around the Ferrovia trying to pick up Ukrainian and Polish migrant women (2002, p.184). Black migrant women in Italy were often assumed to be prostitutes and openly accused of selling their bodies during episodes of racist abuse or aggression<sup>18</sup>. The catcalls that migrant women were subjected to were not unconnected to the jokey forms of address that Neapolitan men gave out to migrant men, such as ‘*Oi, blondie!*’ (to black men) and ‘Myfren’, as discussed in the last chapter. These calls were often directed at men unknown to the callers themselves and should be understood as part of the same gendered power dynamics of the space of the pavement. They are revelatory of particular locally hegemonic forms of masculinity, in particular that of the joker, the virile macho man and the gangster which are connected to Naples’ history of racialisation and subordination. Humourous catcalls, on the part of Neapolitan men who acted within a generalised local consensus, attempted to mitigate the difficult political and economic legacy of this history.

Neapolitan men were also able to make use of a multilingual plethora of catcalls. The proficient multilingualness of catcalling in the city was linked to Naples’ history as a port city, fruit of myriad creolising encounters in complex and improvisational

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<sup>18</sup> Evidence shows that Nigeria is a centre for the illicit trafficking of women and children to Europe, and especially Italy. It is estimated that over 80 per cent of the African prostitutes in the sex trade in Italy are from Nigeria (Okojie 2009, pp.150-151).

situations of inequality and subordination. One day, whilst doing fieldwork at Ku's stall, a young Neapolitan man came to sit on an empty plant pot near us. He introduced himself as Luca, the nephew of the Neapolitan street vendor selling CDs opposite Ku's stall. He told me that he was a builder and had previously been working to waterproof the region's road tunnels, but had just lost his job. He complained that he had nothing to do, and no money, so was hanging out in front of the station to waste some time. As we sat there, he periodically called out 'Koniciwa' to East Asian-looking women who walked by us, 'Madame' to West African-looking women, and 'Uè Bella' (hey pretty) to European-looking women. He then turned to me and said, in Italian, 'aren't our women beautiful?' He then told me, 'you have such beautiful eyes. I can't help but notice them.' I tried to smile politely and was fortunately saved by Luca's uncle who snuck up to Ku's stall and made a big show of stealing some of his merchandise from him.

In this episode Luca coded women within a racialised hierarchy of feminine beauty, where 'our' (belonging to Neapolitan, male) women were at the top of the scale. His comment about my eyes acted to place me outside of that category as he wouldn't have said anything if I'd had dark eyes and looked more phenotypically Mediterranean. As such he was making it clear that I appeared to him as exotic and different, in a way that was interesting to him but not equal to the qualities of Italian or Neapolitan women. This was something I was used to, but it still made me feel vulnerable and unsafe. The pleasure he derived from catcalling the female passers-by, and from harassing me, was clearly heightened by the discomfort and dirty looks he received in response. His performance of macho, southern Italian virility appeared to salve the frustrations he expressed at the beginning of our conversation about being without work and having nothing to do. The brutal ways in which he subordinated women on the pavement was

part of the way in which he derived power in a situation of his own subordination and marginalisation.

Gay Neapolitan men also harassed migrant men, made vulnerable by the fact of their subaltern positionalities and working life along the side of roads. It would definitely not be safe for gay men to approach straight white men in the city in this way, and these practices were illustrative of the ways in which masculinities can be said to exist within a hierarchy of masculinities where being oppressed and oppressing someone else can meld together, transform and mutate, particularly when gendered violence is cut through with racial and class dimensions (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, pp.845-7). On one occasion I saw a local man make an obscene gesture and wiggle his tongue at a black man walking in front of me with a female companion. A few of my Senegalese male friends also told me they had been followed home after nights out by men in cars seeking to pay them for sex. Black male street vendors seemed to be particularly vulnerable to these sorts of attention due to the objectification of black masculinity as exotic and hypersexual. I once spent an evening at the stall of one research participant locked in an awkward interaction between him and a Neapolitan man who regularly came to the place where he put his stall out looking for him. The fact of the Neapolitan man's attraction was never expressed explicitly but my informant felt it strongly enough that he had avoided repeated invites to meet up outside of work. The Senegalese men who told me about these sorts of things happening to them were generally really offended by being harassed in this way and angry about the way it affected their working day and impeded their free movement around the city. In these encounters the greater sexual privilege lay with the gay Neapolitan men and they themselves were vulnerable because of their economic marginalisation and, often, undocumented status.

At the same time there was a fair amount of homophobia in their reactions. Ibra once pointed out a Neapolitan man walking past his stall and told me, 'look, a gourjigen: a man-woman.' I asked him what he thought about 'gourjigen' and he told me they were bad. As González-López' research about the sexual vulnerability of migrant Mexicans in America shows, not all heterosexual individuals or groups are privileged. Having previously occupied hegemonic masculine positionalities in their country of origin, migrant men can find themselves locked within 'intra-male hierarchical interactions' where they are the subject of sexual harassment and policing (2006, p.68).

### Catcalling Female Street Vendors

Comfort has run a market stall around Via Bologna and Piazza Garibaldi since she arrived in Naples from Nigeria twenty years ago. She was the first black woman running a stall in the area and has learnt to be tough, uncompromising and distrustful in order to safeguard her position in the market. When I was first introduced to her she had a spot right on the corner of Via Bologna, one of the most lucrative points in the market for taking advantage of the footfall that passed by the market going from the train station to the city centre. She was furious that the unlicensed and undocumented Guinean vendors were moving in on her spot and subjected me to a loud tirade that was designed to reach the ears of said vendors, sitting silently and stubbornly around her behind their mobile stalls. She was also deeply suspicious of the other Nigerian women who had set up stalls selling wax cloth, jewellery and accessories further up the market over recent years, and told me that she had called the police on them, claiming they were selling contraband and hadn't paid all their taxes. She was, however, cordial to the Senegalese, Guinean and Nigerian women who wheeled mobile stalls up and down the

market selling food, snacks and hot drinks, often buying rice and soup from them for her lunch.

It was important for Comfort to be both physically and verbally aggressive with the men on the market in order to safeguard her spot and status. The *pacchisti*, or scammers, that hung out at the top of the market particularly liked to tease her by calling out her name and trying to tickle or embrace her. She would smile at them and then hit them soundly, telling me, ‘they’re funny but they’re not good people.’ On one occasion one of these men came to greet her, reaching through the curtain of clothes hanging round her stall and calling out:

**Man:** Comfort how are you?

**Comfort:** Good, and you? How’s work?

**Man:** I’m always good when I see you, Comfort. You work better in summer don’t you? The winter is always slow... How’s your work going today?

**Comfort:** (making a face and rubbing a thumb and two fingers together) Need money.

**Man:** Comfort if you need money you just need to ask... How much do you need? A thousand, a hundred? I have (riffling through pockets) two euros.

**Comfort:** Give me! I need to buy some water.

**Man:** You need water? You just need to ask! I will go and get it for you...

The man trotted off, leaving Comfort looking slightly bemused. He was never to return.

On this occasion the man put on a mocking performance of male chivalry, pretending to play the role of the male provider and family man with Comfort. His offers were not

meant – he was only joking about getting her the water but, in doing so, he was also insinuating that Comfort was not a suitable woman for the traditional feminine role of subordinate wife. She was unsuitable because she supported herself financially and also, as discussed below, because she was black. The power dynamics in this sort of jokey language are different to the forms of banter between men explored in part one of this chapter. Comfort remained on a back foot in the face of the man’s mocking tone of voice and swift delivery. She was clearly confused about the real purpose of his exhortations and declarations which, instead, became part of the banter between the other men around Comfort’s stall, that she was excluded from.

Comfort and Gennaro, two of the street’s longest-standing resident market traders, have had a tumultuous relationship over the years. I began doing fieldwork just as they started talking again after blanking each other for a decade. Gennaro was always careful about getting on Comfort’s bad side:

**Gennaro:** Alfò! (**his cousin**) Omar! You handsome guy! Omar, help us to understand...

Gennaro drew his cousin and Omar over to him to discuss matters pertaining to the market’s threatened closure. Comfort went over to join the discussion. On the way one of the con men tried to grab her round the waist, receiving a number of thumps in return.

**Comfort:** *That guy’s ‘ricchione (homophobic Neapolitan word), innit!*

**Gennaro:** *Hey there now!*

**Pacchista:** *What, you’re even wearing gloves? So you offer a full service then? (eruption of laughter amongst the Neapolitan men).*

**Comfort: (confused)** That's not to get cold! Not to get cold!

I asked Gennaro what 'full service' meant and he told me that the man was calling her a prostitute, because gloves (guanti) can also mean a condom and a 'full service' is when a prostitute offers full intercourse.

**Me:** Do you think she understood?

**Gennaro:** I don't think so, or she would have given him a good kicking!

Comfort has learned to speak back to the discriminatory spatialised social codes of the Via Bologna street market by co-opting forms of banter and a physical aggressiveness learned over the years from the men around her: '*That guy's 'ricchione, innit?*' As discussed earlier in the chapter, accusations of homosexuality are an important way in which male domination was exercised and sexual conventions were preserved within the context of Neapolitan pavement interactions. However it is clear, from the fact that Comfort's body remained vulnerable to abuse and aggression, that these learnt forms of masculine banter were not a sufficient challenge to the masculine dominance of the Neapolitans she was interacting with. Comfort's efforts to fight for equal inclusion resulted in her being disciplined and reminded of her positionality within the political economy of sexual hierarchies in Naples, where black women were all prostitutes or former prostitutes. The men's language was both comic and violent, referring grotesquely to intercourse and prostitution in order to fix Comfort's body around markers of race, gender and sexuality that denied her full inclusion in society. As a speaker of Italian as a second language, Comfort's lack of intimacy with local terms and Neapolitan phrases rendered her unable to fully realise and react to the social and spatial dynamics she was falling victim to. The man who spoke knew she would be unlikely to understand and took advantage of this to have a laugh at her expense, with the receptive

complicity of the other men present. In Naples, language practices of inclusion and exclusion were constructed through a hierarchical linguistic dexterity with both Italian, Neapolitan and locally understood meanings about sex and gender.

### Catcalling Female Ethnographers



*Figure 22: Omar and I checking my field notes, photo by Serigne (July 2012)*

My arrival on the street markets in central Naples was also disruptive of local conventions about how women can occupy public space. Serigne's playful decision to secretly photograph me doing fieldwork (above) was highly suggestive of the ways in which my activities turned traditional gender roles and ideas of sexual exchange and authority upside-down. By photographing me, Serigne sought to subvert the research relationship and make me the subject of the ethnography instead of him.

Episodes like this, and much more aggressive instances of policing and control, followed me throughout my time in the field, as the following excerpts show:

On my first day doing fieldwork at Via Bologna (November 2011), one of the *pacchisti* approached me to ask what I was doing there. I explained that I was writing a thesis about life in the market, keen to re-assure him that I was a scholar and not connected to Town Hall, law enforcement or the media. He then asked me whether I was Polish. I replied that I was not but he repeated the question, unconvinced that I am being truthful. Although Via Bologna had been the subject of past ethnographies, and I knew a number of Italian women, involved in antiracist activism who had worked with the local traders, I didn't quite fit into those familiar somatic tropes in everyone's eyes, because of my light colouring and slightly accented Italian.

Later on that same morning I was sitting with Serigne and Elage at Elage's stall. The young Roma girl who often hung around Serigne and his wife Sohna appeared in the company of an old Italian lady. 'Where is her mum', the lady asked us. We reassured her we were keeping an eye on the girl. The lady told us that the streets were dangerous. She described how once she found another girl wandering around like this one and, taking her home, found her mother in a drunken stupor. The young girl seemed scared of this older lady and darted out of her grasp to come and stand next to me behind the stall. The old lady asked me, 'don't you work?' I told her I was a student and studying the market. She responded, 'but if you've studied why don't you look for friends, more like yourself? Who have also studied? You might find you're better off...'

Some of the other vendors I worked with were also concerned about how inappropriate it was for a young, single white woman to be hanging around on market stalls. As previously discussed, Alessandro, of Peppe's Bags at Poggioreale market, asked me whether I had a boyfriend and whether he was annoyed about the project I was doing.

Alessandro didn't allow his wife and mother to work on the family market stall at Poggioreale because he considered street markets inappropriate places for women, unless they were performing traditional gender roles like shopping.



*Figure 23: Abramo, Elage and Serigne at Elage's stall, photo by author (February 2012)*

I was also the subject of a series of more typical instances of catcalling from passers-by unknown to me. This was particularly the case if I was doing fieldwork with black, male street vendors. Middle aged Neapolitan men would often stare and make angry comments, such as one man who told Elage and myself that, 'it just looks bad, you and this young woman sitting together.' Often I would sit on a spare chair or stand behind the stalls with my informants, as the above photo suggests. Here I was taking the photo but it is possible to imagine what our bodies would have looked like standing or sitting in a line. On one occasion I was walking to an Antiracist Forum meeting with Omar when the men at a nearby bar whistled and shouted at us as we passed. These aggressive instances of catcalling formed part of an attempt to subdue the threat of miscegenation inherent in my interactions with these men.

Most of the Neapolitan and non-Neapolitan men I came into contact with flirted with me jokingly, as the *pacchisti* liked to do with Comfort. For example, Samba tried very hard to get me to go clubbing with him. Mimmo also pressed me to go out for dinner and asked for my number. A Chinese man, who went by the name of Gigi locally, liked to follow me around and insisted on my getting special treatment in shops. On one occasion I went to get a kebab for lunch and he kept shouting at the server to make my kebab before anyone else's. I found these episodes of harassment extremely stressful and embarrassing. Some of the women I worked with also tried to set me up with their single male relatives. People would always ask me whether I was married or in a relationship and, after a while I decided it was safer for me to say I was, in order to further awkward situations. I also avoided walking through certain areas when I wasn't doing fieldwork and took particular routes around the city to avoid unwanted attention.

However, some of the men in my sites, like Gennaro, Serigne, Sohna, Modou and Ibra, took me under their wing and supported my project intellectually. They relied upon heteronormative notions of kinship to let people know that I was accounted for and my honour was being protected. Gennaro would tell people I was his daughter and Modou would tell people I was his sister. This did annoy one young Neapolitan friend of Modou who informed us, 'Your sister? She's white!' When I first met Modou's friend Carlo, Modou told Carlo that he was his father and I was his sister. We laughed and then Carlo asked if I was Modou's girlfriend. I told Carlo about my project and he responded, 'what are you researching? The bog?' Carlo's use of grotesque comic and abusive language served here to overturn Modou's claim of kinship and put my honour back into question.

Using Bakhtin's work on carnivalesque markets (1984), I have already talked about the ways in which Neapolitan markets were ambivalent and improvisational sites of the carnivalesque, where grotesque and vulgar language, to do with the lower parts of the body and its digestive or reproductive functions, circulated freely. Some people, like Gennaro or Salvatore, were quite embarrassed when I asked them to explain particular phrases or terminology being bantered about, such as 'fiki fiki' or 'full service'. My requests for explanations occasionally forced them to confront the inherent violence of this language, and the ways in which they were complicit in oppression or in oppressing vulnerable people (Connel and Messerschmidt 2005). These men were capable of both kindness and cruelty in their dealings with the Other, and Gennaro in particular was part of left-wing political networks and had a developed understanding of social justice. The fact these men could be responsible for, or a silent and amused bystander to, episodes of violent gendered domination testifies to the complex ways in which they experienced their own marginalisation as under-employed, southern Italian males. The brutality of some of their behavior needs to be understood as part of the way in which they sought to mitigate their own subordination at the expense of others.

### Catcalling Interracial Couples

Neapolitan pavements are also spaces for relaxing evening promenades, popular with young families and courting couples. Public displays of intimacy, like kissing and holding hands, are looked upon with disapproval by many Senegalese street vendors. Once Ibra asked me if couples in England also kissed in public. I told him they did and he retorted, 'all whites the same then.' I asked him what would happen to a couple kissing in public in Senegal and he told me their parents would discipline them. In traditional Mediterranean societies, courting couples promenaded in public only with a

chaperone present and certainly didn't kiss. This was true for my parents, although by the late 1970s, there were different rules in Naples compared to the village my Mum is from. 1968 and the feminist movement had changed urban life in the south irreversibly. Today, young, white, heterosexual couples are largely able to stroll along the pavements as part of the accepted sexual conventions of pavement life in Naples.

However, not all couples enjoy this luxury. Public intimacy between Neapolitans and non-Neapolitans, and particularly between Neapolitan women and black men, still creates scandal and anger, re-awakening the painful memory of mixed race children being born to Neapolitan women and African American Allied soldiers after the WW2 surrender. As I have described above, the mere presence of me sitting at a market stall in an African market was enough to generate aggressive catcalls and angry looks. On another occasion I stopped in the street to greet a male Senegalese friend whom I spoke to in English. A police car, being followed by an armoured truck, stopped in the middle of the road so that the police officer at the wheel could stare at us for about 30 seconds. Fortunately it didn't go any further than that, perhaps because the officer was unsure about whether we were tourists, given we were speaking English. From talking to other people I came to understand that these encounters were quite frequent. I was told that the Neapolitan girlfriend of a different Senegalese male friend was subjected to a loud tirade on the part of a group of young Neapolitan men, who accused her of 'liking black men'. Another friend told me that she had been called a prostitute who '*liked these Americans*' by a middle aged Neapolitan man at the beach with her black African partner. The sight of heterosexual interracial couples signaled a critical breakdown of Neapolitan male power and violent verbal attacks sought to reinstate the rules governing transcultural interactions in the city through terror and humiliation.

Interracial couples in Naples represented both the dissolution of hegemonic southern Italian femininity and a threat to male Neapolitan domination. One day Salvatore decided to broach this topic with me. He complained about a group of young female students who lived in one of the apartments in the block where he worked as a doorman. When he went to knock on their door they always answered in their pijamas and always invited him in for a snack. He has always thought their behaviour was scandalous. Another female friend also often asked to use his personal toilet when she passed by and he was always horrified that she never locked the door or asked him to guard the door outside. 'You never know what can happen these days', he told me. He explained that a man might pretend to be a friend to a woman but, as soon as he got the chance, would try to take advantage of her sexually. At this point our conversation was interrupted by a young couple on their evening stroll. The Senegalese man stopped to greet Ibra and Samba in Wolof while his Neapolitan girlfriend waited for him:

**Salvatore: (loudly, to me)** You see that? Not all these Senegalese men are waiting for their wives.

**Girlfriend: (to her boyfriend)** Baby, I have to pee!

**Salvatore:** Look! She even says that she has to piss!

Salvatore explained to me that girls needed to be even more careful when they were with black men, because they were so physically strong. I pointed out that Ibra was actually slighter and shorter than him, but he told me that he was only talking in general. He explained that black men were stronger than other men so if things started to get intimate between a white woman and a black man, and the girl decided she didn't want to have sex, the man could easily still force her to:

**Salvatore:** *Only a rifle would stop him then. Not a pistol. You would need a rifle.*

Salvatore's astonishing pronouncement called to mind the idea of the shotgun wedding, the term used to describe a marriage that comes about because the bride falls pregnant. The term, which originated in the United States in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, reflects a practice that was common in North America, the Middle East and Europe until very recently. Italians are familiar with the image of the bride's father threatening the groom with a shotgun to make him go ahead with the wedding and save the bride's honour. Think, for example, of the comic scene in *Il Postino*, just after Beatrice and Mario have finally kissed, where Beatrice's mother appears in the village square holding a rifle and looking murderous. Questions of feminine honour and shame, particularly related to spatial segregation between men and women, were also a key component of the Neapolitan sexual contract (Harding 1975; Gilmore 1982; Reiter 1975). At the same time he evoked a colonial image, redolent with ideas of safari and big game hunting, and painted black masculinity as over-sexualised, irrational and dangerous. This was not a notion that had occurred to Salvatore naturally and nor could it be passed off as ignorance. Rather it was connected to particular forms of knowledge about black masculinity that arrived in Italy via American mass culture in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century that were then re-activated with the arrival of black men arriving in Italy from Sub-Saharan Africa (Giuliani 2013, p.262). Salvatore's humorous joking about women and interracial desire co-existed alongside the constantly prowling threat of and desire for violence and domination.

Salvatore would return to his obsession with black male sexuality and strength and the rape of white women on numerous occasions. He was convinced that Senegalese street vendors were all potential rapists because they spent so many years away from their womenfolk. On one occasion, speaking of a Neapolitan woman, who had attracted the attention of all the men on the road as she walked by, he muttered darkly, 'if she decides to get down with a black... who hasn't seen a woman for years... they really need to do

fiki fiki!' The catcall through which Neapolitan men policed the threat of miscegenation and community dissolution represented by the interracial couple, was merely the public verbalisation of a set of much darker and violent fantasies and fears about the possibilities of transcultural interaction in the age of globalised migration. Salvatore often spoke these comments to me in an aside, and the violence of his language was also a way in which he sought to intimidate, control and threaten me, a woman who was transgressing sexual preserves by hanging out alongside black street vendors on the pavement.

## Concluding Thoughts

In this chapter I have explored banter and catcalling as interconnected elements of a speech genre through which both local sexual conventions are preserved and perpetuated, and acts of gendered control are carried out, on the Neapolitan pavement. I argued that banter is a kind of playful, competitive talk practiced between men across transcultural boundaries that walks a fine line between reciprocal engagement and male-on-male domination. Catcalling, on the other hand, can be understood as an overt form of sexual violence that is used by men against more vulnerable people, who are seen to transgress historically-inflected sexual and racial preserves. Humour is central to the ways in which this violent language works and it both shares and exacerbates tensions, as part of acts of oppression, and in complicity with other people's acts of oppression, against those more vulnerable than them.

I argued that these consensual and non-consensual power games were connected to the forms of wounded local masculinity that have emerged in Naples as a result of its history of cultural, political and economic subordination. I used Mbembe's writings about the processes of brutalisation that subordinated groups of people experience, in

order to argue that the talk of some Neapolitan men towards women and migrants is a way in which they seek to offset their own marginalisation and terror (2002, p.13-15).

These speaking practices exist alongside acts of solidarity, comprehension and compassion, often within the behaviour of the same people.

My own positionality was also directly interwoven with the racialised and sexualised dynamics of pavement life that I was witnessing. Many of the performances of dominance that I was party to were put on as shows of masculinity for my benefit and, many times, I was the target of catcalls and sexual control. This forced me to change aspects of my behaviour in order to protect myself from things I found distressing and invasive, giving me a sense of what it means for people who work on street markets and have to deal with this every day.

In the following two chapters I turn to the talking practices that seek to deal directly with the legacy of meanings about language and communication in Neapolitan markets in the age of globalised migration.

## Chapter Six: Talking About Talk to Talk About Difference

<i>“Un populu mittitulu a catina</i>	<i>“You can put a people in chains</i>
<i>spugghiatulu</i>	<i>remove their clothing</i>
<i>attupatici a vucca</i>	<i>stop up their mouths</i>
<i>è ancora libiru</i>	<i>they are still free.</i>
<i>livatici u travagghiu</i>	<i>take away their jobs</i>
<i>u passaportu</i>	<i>their passports</i>
<i>a tavola unni mancia</i>	<i>the table where they eat</i>
<i>u lettu unni dormi,</i>	<i>the bed where they sleep</i>
<i>è ancora riccu.</i>	<i>they are still rich</i>
<i>un populu diventa poviru e servu</i>	<i>a people become poor and servile</i>
<i>quanno ci arrobanu la lingua</i>	<i>when their language is stolen</i>
<i>addutata di patri:</i>	<i>something received from their forefathers</i>
<i>è persa pi sempri.</i>	<i>is lost forever.</i>
<i>diventa poviru e servu</i>	<i>they become poor and servile</i>
<i>quannu i parole nun figghianu parole</i>	<i>when words don't birth words</i>
<i>e si manciano tra d'iddi”</i>	<i>and just consume each other”</i>

*Extract from ‘Lingua e dialettu’ (Language and Dialect) (1970) by Sicilian poet Ignazio Buttitta, translated from Sicilian and Italian translations to English by the author.*

Buttita’s poem, reproduced in part above, speaks of language loss as something intimately related to the loss of identity and agency that is the heritage of the Italian nation-building project in the south. I have argued that this history is an important lens through which to understand articulations of difference and belonging in Naples today. Intertwined with this are the ways in which the city’s port identity has always made space for particular forms of pragmatic, horizontal and enjoyable cohabitation with difference (Trotter 2008a, 2008b). I have always noticed that Neapolitans are hyper-

aware of how multiple communicative forms shape their existences in ways that are both painful and joyful. The kinds of cultural weight that are ascribed to language are very common amongst both born and raised Neapolitans as well as more recent arrivals, although they might be configured differently or serve different ideological purposes. This appeared particularly true in the marketplaces I studied, where the realities of new migration and racialised difference rubbed alongside older histories of difference and the ambivalent, carnivaleque forms of meaning-making that have historically operated in markets (Bakhtin 1984, p.p9-12):

It was lunchtime at Via Bologna, early on in my fieldwork. I was sitting on a plastic carton outside Riccardo's souvenir/sex shop eating a sandwich that Sohna had made for me out of her mobile food stall. Sohna and her husband Serigne were there keeping me company, along with Riccardo who was standing at the entrance of his shop taking some air. The sandwich filling was a Senegalese chicken stew, or *soupe* as they would call it, with lettuce leaves and a slathering of mustard-mayonnaise and hot sauce. I was at the quiet end of the market but I could hear the vendors' calls from the more busy stalls further down the road, along with the faint notes of Egyptian music from a CD stall and the revving of mopeds and cars going round Garibaldi Square. A young Roma girl of about five or six approached me with her hand stretched out, asking for something without me being able to quite catch the words. I knew her as she spent most days on the street in playing distance of older relatives. She had decided she wanted to befriend me. I offered her my un-opened soft drink but Serigne shouted at her to, 'leave people alone when they're eating!' She looked chastened and walked quickly away. Serigne turned to me and told me, 'they are all the same' and Riccardo opined, 'It's in their DNA to ask for stuff'. There was an awkward pause. I didn't know Riccardo very well yet so I told him a

bit more about the research I was doing. I explained that I was interested in how Neapolitans and migrants got on with each other and how Naples had changed as a result of migration. He told me that I should be looking at the different neighbourhoods in Naples in order to get an understanding of the different ‘realities’ at play in city. To illustrate this, he told me how in the Quartieri Spagnoli<sup>19</sup> people still had Spanish words in the Neapolitan they spoke. For example, they said ‘è salita’ instead of ‘è scesa’ to say ‘she’s gone out’<sup>20</sup>. For Riccardo these cultural ‘realities’ were part of an older emotional legacy, related to domination and sea trade, that pushed in, uninvited, to forcefully interrogate the contemporary urban situation. And above all, for him, these ‘realities’ were linguistic. The way people talked showed their cultural and biological lineage. He might have said it was an audible manifestation of their ‘DNA’. He talked about talk as a way of talking about difference.

In the above episode, talk about talk shaped communication as a practical necessity (a learnt skill, a pedagogic and playful process); as a means of constituting identity and expressing ambivalent forms of solidarity; and as a way of reflecting on what Naples was, is now, and is in the process of becoming. As a particular kind of speech genre it attended to the multi-accentual, ambiguous and provisional dialogic processes at stake in the multilingual reality that has resulted from intensified migration over the last two decades. It directly addressed the complex linguistic dynamics that arose from the everyday acts of transcultural money-making and socialising in street markets, that have

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<sup>19</sup> The Quartieri Spagnoli neighbourhood was originally a garrison built during the 16<sup>th</sup> century to house the Spanish soldiers needed to quell Neapolitan revolts against the Borbonic rulers.

<sup>20</sup> Actually they say ‘è sagliutt’ /e səju:t/. Riccardo automatically translated the Neapolitan into Italian as he could see I wasn’t local.

been the subject of the last two chapters, by situating them within a local context that was both part of a national anti-immigration politics and the the rationale of Fortress Europe, and also, in many ways, distinctive from it. The result was that non-hierarchical and non-universalising visions of difference were able to exist alongside essentialising and reductive expressions of belonging. The first part of the chapter examines how talk about talk functions tactically to allow horizontal forms of cultural mediation to come about between diverse people. The second part of the chapter looks at the pedagogic practices that shape interactions across cultural, racial and linguistic boundaries in Naples. Part three examines the ways that talk about talk allows people to reflect on and mourn the changes that have taken place in the city as a result of globalisation and migration. Finally, in part four, I look at the way that talk about talking English relates to ambivalent questions of power and ideological struggle.

## Cultural Mediation

Professional cultural mediators occupy an important role as linguistic and cultural intermediaries between migrant groups or individuals and state institutions. They are qualified to work in places like schools, hospitals, and migrant advice bureaus, with the aim of interpreting and carefully negotiating on behalf of people who can't speak the official language of the country they are in. Many of the activist friends I made whilst seeking access for this project were professional cultural mediators, including Omar. The way in which they worked across boundaries, from the street market to City Hall, taught me a lot about the values placed on language and language use in Naples.

One afternoon in January, after Via Bologna market had closed for the day, I accompanied Omar to meet his colleague Luisa, an Italian cultural mediator at a migrant advice bureau around the back of the train station. As we chatted there was a man

outside calling repeatedly for his mum to appear at the balcony. The increasingly urgent and drawn-out cries of ‘Mamma! Mamma!’ went on for at least five minutes, eventually distracting us from our conversation. Luisa told me jokingly that I was absorbing a true flavour of Neapolitan essence. Omar asked ‘why doesn’t he just ring the doorbell?’, and Luisa quipped back, ‘No – he wants everyone to know he’s calling for his mum!’ A few minutes later a Ukrainian woman came into the bureau and, seeing me, immediately misrecognised me as a co-national and started talking in Ukrainian, provoking laughter and Omar’s comment of ‘not again! She’s English!’ The woman laughed wryly as if recognising that she had been the victim of a practical joke. She was there on behalf of a friend who had been imprisoned. She wanted us to call the friend’s lawyer as she believed they would take someone who speaks good Italian more seriously. Omar and Luisa gave her the advice she needed and after she left, this provoked a discussion about whether native Italians or migrant individuals made better cultural mediators for other migrants. The question of language in this scenario was pressing on a number of levels. Omar argued that a good mediator did not have to speak grammatically perfect Italian in order to be successful. Instead, he said, they needed to understand different cultures and how domestic and international laws worked. He hated having his Italian corrected and wished people would just listen to what he was saying. He also believed that often people corrected him as a way to mobilise power against him. In a way this assertion was reinforced by the woman who had come to the bureau – who we all spoke Italian to without any problem – when she asked for a native speaker to contact the lawyer on her behalf.

Multiple ways of referring to people talking were used in this situation to position the different social actors, including myself, within and against a hierarchy of Neapolitan belonging. Not only were different cultural meanings about Naples mobilised and

partially deconstructed – the joking and comic scenarios about Neapolitan men and their mums, the (in)ability to understand the culture because of some obscure insider-outsider status, or the (in)ability to recognise where people might be from, presumably because of Naples' own hybrid past – but these ambiguous interactions were related to the uneven workings of power via the ideological superiority denoted to the idea of the native speaker (Rampton 1990), the spectre of the lawyer, and the other institutional bodies that migrants and their mediators regularly have to interact with. This is revelatory of the ways in which hierarchical 'language attitudes' are used to subordinate and disempower vulnerable people (Smitherman 1977, p.199). However, the communal laughter we all shared also created a temporary break in the hierarchies we ourselves were discussing, allowing for a transverse and non-reductive co-existence with difference, or a Glissantian Relation, to emerge (Bakhtin 1984, p.16; Glissant 1981). Our ability to speak, mediate and argue on our own or others' behalves was a consequence of the ways in which *actually* speaking situated us within hegemonic discourses of power and inequality.

Moving away from this site of professional cultural mediation and reflection, this scenario took place on the eve of the day of Epiphany on the train from Naples to Sorrento. I was sitting in a crowded compartment of people who had mainly come to Naples for the day to visit the festive market stalls. In Italy this has always been a religious holiday of equal importance to Christmas day, although that has changed a lot as a result of globalisation. I wasn't able to use a recording device here, but I memorised the details of the discussion that took place and wrote everything down as soon as I got home. It began with a middle-aged Polish man (Piero) who started up a conversation with a group of young Italian teenage men, sitting opposite him, about the merits of drinking a bit of vodka in order to get going first thing on a winter morning. It goes

without saying that the level of interaction between people in the train compartment would have been highly unusual in the UK and was something very particular to the daily experience of urban life in Naples. Progressively more people got involved in the conversation as things got more entertaining:

**Teenager 1:** Is Poland in the EU?

**Piero:** *Poland has been in Europe for seven years! Schengen for three! Do you know what Schengen is?*

**Teenager 1:** erm no (**trails off**). So what is it anyway?

**Piero:** *Ha, I can see you don't understand! You obviously haven't done school, have you? I have studied a lot. It's to do with people committing crimes and police being able to chase them across borders. You all think Polish and Romanian people are shit don't you?*

**Teenager:** Not at all! (**His friends all nod and hold their hands palm-side up in a gesture of peace**)

**Piero:** *You know, another thing vodka's good for is curing a cold. You need to put loads of pepper-*

**Teenager 2:** How many spoons?

**Piero:** *Loads! It's gotta taste like shit! This is what we drink on New Year as well: two bottles of bubbly and ten of vodka!*

Laughter rattled round the train compartment. The teenagers got up to go and shook Piero's hand before leaving. At this point another young Italian man, Giuliano, started up a conversation with Piero who, it turned out, he vaguely knew.

**Giuliano:** You know I work in Eastern Europe, across Croatia, in Zagreb.

**Piero:** *Oh yeah? I've worked in Croatia too. What other places do you know??*

**They list a number of small towns they've been to.**

**Giuliano:** So how's your friend, what's he called, Alfonso?

**Piero:** *Oh – Alfons! Yeah – he's good. You and me do know each other don't we?*

*I'm that 'Polish bastard'!*

**Giuliano :** No – it's not like that. We don't see it like that.

**Piero:** (to the woman sitting to his right) *Madam I should apologise for swearing.*

(She smiles, looking a bit uncomfortable. Piero then turns to the man sitting next to me) *Are you Polish?*

**Man:** No – I'm Albanian.

**Giuliano:** What language do they speak in Albania?

**Man:** Mainly Albanian and Italian.

**Piero:** *In Poland we only speak Polish, but we had to learn Russian at school.*

*What's the point of that? Nowadays what you really need is English and French.*

(Everyone in the train carriage nods and murmurs in agreement) *How long have you been here? (to the Albanian man)*

**Man:** Only four months.

**Piero:** *What! you speak such good Italian!*

**Giuliano:** yeah – that's amazing!

**Man:** *I know.* But you know I spoke Italian before 'cause we speak it in Albania. I also speak Yugoslav and Greek.

**Giuliano :** You know what job you could get here? (**He means a translator**)

**Man:** Oh I already have a job. I'm a tattoo artist. I had my own shop in Greece and I want to open one up here but I need to get to know people first.

At this point the three men started comparing tattoos and another Italian man joined in the conversation, as he wanted to buy a tattoo for his girlfriend. The Albanian man

introduced himself as Besi and his friend sitting next to him as Ahmed from Morocco and they all started swapping numbers. Everyone in the train compartment, including myself, was watching avidly and people were leaning in from the corridor to get a good view of the discussion. People laughed and reacted to what was being said. In the middle of this my sister called me to find out when to pick me up from the station and I had to make a critical decision about what language to answer the phone in, finally opting for a mix of both, as this is what we usually do and I also wanted to see what would happen. I said, 'Pronto? Hi Joanna sto sul treno. Yes. Come and get me from Vico at 7.40, ok? Ciao, ciao'<sup>21</sup>. The atmosphere in the train compartment thickened palpably. Piero got off at Pompei, kissing Giuliano, Ahmed and Besi goodbye on each cheek and promising to catch up again soon. The four remaining moved to sit all together. The Italian man who wanted a tattoo for his girlfriend started talking:

**Giuseppe:** You know – I'm an artist, a painter. I've been looking for any kind of work for seven months, but nothing!

**Besi:** There's work here! You could be a labourer you know? Just to get by. I don't manage just on tattoos. By day I'm a carpenter.

**Giuseppe:** *Oh yeah (crossing his arms angrily across his chest)? Where is this work?*

**Besi:** Well, we all find work... but you know there's this economic crisis going on so...

**Giuseppe:** how did you come to Italy?

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<sup>21</sup> 'Pronto' is what Italian people say when they pick up the phone. 'Sto sul treno' means, 'I'm on the train.'

**Besi:** we got our visas in the latest round of immigration amnesties, didn't we? (He turns to Ahmed who nods in agreement.)

**Ahmed:** *We decided to stay in Naples 'cause, you know, people are nicer down here. They're not as mean as they are up north.*

**Giuliano :** It's true. They're such cold people up there.

**Besi:** No – it's also because Neapolitans also go out to work like us

**Giuliano:** Yeah – that's true as well.

**Besi:** What do you all think about immigrants?

**Giuliano:** (spreading his arms wide) For me it doesn't matter where you're from... it just matters that you're a friend to me.

Their discussion turned to wages in the south compared to the low cost of living. The train had emptied a lot by now and the four men had been enjoying their chat so much that Besi, Ahmed and Giuseppe had missed their stop. They got off at Castellammare di Stabia to get a return train and, as they exited, Ahmed turned to me to say goodbye as well.

**Ahmed:** Bye English! (I smile)

**Giuliano:** (to me) So where are you getting off?

**Me:** Vico Equense.

**Giuliano :** Me too! Are you from there?

It turned out Giuliano and I were from the same village and he went to school with my eldest cousin. We said goodbye at the train station and promised to say hi if we saw each other again.

This episode was a testament to the collective and dialogic ‘festive laughter’ or ‘familiar speech’ through which people work through ideas of difference, belonging and positonality in public spaces in Naples (Bakhtin 1984, pp.9-12). Here, talk about talk – which incorporated discussion about how many languages people talk, what languages are useful, what are key phrases and words to learn, and how well people speak a language – allowed people who had never met (or didn’t know each other very well) to have an open discussion about fraught issues like immigration and unemployment. The conversation about speaking as a hierarchical and political practice connected the fates of the migrant and Neapolitan men in the carriage to the kinds of precariousness and instability that have been explored in the last two chapters. This spoke both to the kinds of interconnected work activities that they got involved with in order to make ends meet in the south of Italy; and also to the reasons why people have to move away from home to get work. Ahmed suggested, to mutual agreement, that they understood each other better because Neapolitans ‘go out to work’, by which he meant that many have historically been forced to emigrate in order to find employment. Their joking, swearing and laughter, which included everyone in the train carriage whether they contributed to the discussion or not, created a temporary suspension in normal hierarchies that allowed for transcultural tensions to be lifted and for difficult things to be discussed (Bakhtin 1984, p.16; Smitherman 2006, pp.64-5; 2007). Together, a transverse and non-essentialist vision of cultural difference was imagined, where they helped each other to stay strong and imagine a better future. However, their talk, although part of a conscious public performance, did not allow the equal participation of the women in the carriage, as Piero’s apology for swearing illustrated. The men’s banter defused tensions and established a playful and competitive masculine bonhomie that could not fully incorporate women into the dynamic of its sociality (Hewitt 1998, pp.170-187).

The acts of switching between different languages were also central to the alternative cultural configurations being imagined. This revealed the ambivalent, shifting and temporary conceptualisations of social difference between the men involved in the discussion and involved complicated decision-making processes, as I myself showed when answering the phone to my sister. Piero's choice to speak in a Neapolitanised Italian for the whole conversation was a statement about his own right to belong in Naples, even though he said right at the beginning that he had mainly always worked in Rome and northern Italy. Besi did the same thing when he responded that he knew he spoke good Italian by saying it in dialect ('*o' saccio*' instead of 'lo so'), although he spoke Italian for the rest of the conversation. As I have argued, the particular history of domination in Naples often rotates painfully round the question of Neapolitan and so decisions to use or not use dialect, or to switch between different languages and registers, are never neutral for either locals or newcomers. To quote Moussa, a Malian research participant with a stall at Via Bologna market:

**Moussa:** I can speak Italian and Neapolitan. Lots of my Malian friends can't do that.  
And I know when to speak Neapolitan and when to speak Italian.

Moussa's statement about Neapolitan being connected to street cred and respect speaks to the kinds of gangster masculinity that both migrant and Neapolitan men have to take on to survive in Naples. In contrast, the Italian men in the episode above all spoke in a regional Italian, except for Giuseppe, who slipped into dialect when he got annoyed with Besi. In so doing he re-asserted cultural dominance over Besi even as he expressed brotherhood and solidarity in their shared creative spirit and horizontal struggle to find work. I believe the other young Italian men chose to speak Italian in the belief, misplaced or not, that they wouldn't be understood properly if they had used dialect.

Speaking Italian thus became a gesture of openness and friendliness and a way of avoiding miscommunications descending into linguistic discord. Also, Neapolitan is not used by young people today in the same way as their elders. Although its use is still strongly associated with class and particular neighbourhoods, there are a greater number of young Neapolitans from impoverished areas who have learnt Italian at school and are strongly aware of the negative stereotypes associated with speaking dialect (De Blasi 2005, pp.133-139). There also seems to be a growing trend amongst young people for predominantly using dialect in an aggressive and playful way during verbal slanging matches. This may well be linked to the 'language attitudes' about Neapolitan described above, as well as to the globalisation of American Hip Hop as an expressive medium (Smitherman 1977, p.199; 2006, pp.113-114).

### Playful Pedagogy

Over the last twenty years the Neapolitan, North African, West African and Eastern European people living and working in and around street markets have taught each other words and phrases from each other's languages in order to be able to work together and as a way of forming friendships. I'm not the first ethnographer to note these practices, and their playfulness (Dines 2002; Sarnelli 2003), but I would like to emphasise the pedagogic nature of this linguistic exchange, which feeds into the ambivalent and contingent cultural mediations I have just been describing.

It was late afternoon towards the end of February and I was doing some fieldwork at Ibra's pitch. While he was packing up his stall I offered to let Salvatore read my finished field notes, saying that Ibra had declined the offer because he didn't feel up to doing all the reading in Italian. Salvatore corrected me:

**Salvatore:** Ibra and the others (**Senegalese street traders**) can read Italian all right!

Sometimes they ask me Italian words so they can learn more. For example, they point to a moped and ask how you say that in Italian. All the street traders down this road that I know are good people. And, you know, there's good and bad everywhere. I ask them words in their own language as well, to make friends and to tease them you know... Like, I might ask them, 'how do you say ugly?' and then I call them ugly! (**I smile**) Good! You've understood the game. Here's another one: *mangè dem* means 'I'm going home, bye'<sup>22</sup>. I say it when they leave but sometimes I also say it when they arrive in the morning to jokingly tell them to go away. There was this other guy who spoke good English. Often tourists would ask us all directions in English and I would tell this guy what to say, and also give some advice about precautions to take with your stuff around the train station. But I would do this so it wasn't obvious it was me feeding him the instructions because then the tourists might think I was threatening them, 'cause of what people think about Neapolitans.

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<sup>22</sup> Pronounced /maŋgə dem/.



*Figure 24: Ibra, Giovanni (right) and colleague (left) stand laughing in front of Giovanni's grocery. Salvatore asked not to be in the photo. Photo by author, (March 2012)*

Accordingly with the janus-faced nature of joking and laughter, the episodes of teasing in each other's languages that I saw created the opportunity for both a transcultural conviviality and a racialised power slapdown (Bakhtin 1984, pp.9-12; Voloshinov 1986, pp.23-4). As explored in the last chapter, humorous disparagement, particularly directed at migrant men by Neapolitan men, often served to reinstate hegemonic anti-immigration stereotypes (Passerini 1987, pp.67-126). But poor Neapolitan men were themselves victims of gendered and racialised discrimination – as evidenced by Salvatore's fear, expressed above, that people might think he was a thief if he were to try and help them. The ambivalent nature of multilingual sharing and tormenting between Neapolitan and migrant men in my fieldwork was connected to the unstable racialised position that Neapolitan men occupied. Their aggression was a way in which

they sought to mitigate the pain of their own economic, political and cultural disempowerment (Mbembe 2001, pp.13-15).

This exchange, that happened a week or so after the discussion I have recorded above at Ibra's pitch, showed the multiply accented ways that this learnt teasing practice could play out. All exchanges occurred in a simplified low-pitched Italian, dropping verb conjugations and plurals, which, on the part of the two Italian men, was an attempt to imitate Ibra's spoken Italian. I have tried to render this in my translation:

**Salvatore:** All Senegalese idiots. You, Ibra, you idiot! Look Mohammed: Carabinieri, Police!!

Ibra goes stiff with tension and rapidly scans the roads and pavements around him for signs of police patrols. He sees none and realises Salvatore is just teasing him.

**Ibra:** You the idiot.

He calmly walks off but then Mimmo arrives and Ibra marches over to them smiling and pointing at them.

**Ibra:** Italians all idiots. Italians only eat and screw.

**Mimmo: (proudly, hand on chest)** Yes: Italian man eat three times a day and screw three times a day!

These exchanges of masculine power and aggression between Ibra, Mimmo and Salvatore, carry us back to the discussion about hegemonic and wounded masculinities in Chapter Five. They were revealing of the unequal power dynamics inherent in joking practices and illustrated the different work that the two men, Ibra and Salvatore, actually had to do in learning to interact over racialised linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Moussa's comments (above) about his decision to make an effort to learn both Italian and dialect reflected these gendered and racialised dynamics. He continued thus:

**Me:** So how do you think Italians treat foreigners in Napoli at the moment?

**Moussa:** Well because of the crisis, at the moments there are a few problems. Racism is much better though, well better anyway...

**Me:** I understand. So then years ago, when you arrived in Italy, what did they used to say to you?

**Moussa:** Listen... ok lets be honest here... every now and then they would call me 'black', 'African' –

**Me:** anything else?

**Moussa:** They would say 'negro', 'slave'. They would call you 'Kunta', you know, in Neapolitan so you couldn't understand... you know Kunta: that American slave? (**I nod**). So now I understand well I can defend myself. But you know it's a totally different story now. Where we are now things are definitely a little better.

For Ibra and Moussa, being able to put an Italian person back in their place in their own language was a key form of self-defence in an environment that was very hostile to their presence. However Salvatore claimed that learning words of Wolof figured more strongly as a form of play between him and the Senegalese street vendors who traded near his work. He also understood the ways speaking was tied to power and his own disempowerment but had no qualms about evoking negative racialised stereotypes about Ibra's blackness and masculinity. The laughter produced through these pedagogic practices occasionally allowed for moments of male bonding – like in the photograph of Ibra and Giovanni above, which I have blurred to protect the identities of the men. Ibra, Giovanni and I agreed it showed an embodiment of friendship. On looking at the digital

image, Giovanni gently joked to Ibra that the photo hadn't come very well because they were both pretty ugly. Salvatore, who was also present, agreed that they were all *gorgou niaw* ('ugly man' in Wolof), and all three men cracked up laughing. Then Salvatore said, 'but Ibra, where are you? I can only see two people and a black stain in the middle!' Salvatore used his learnt Wolof as a weapon against Ibra. He appealed to the innocent and open nature of these pedagogic interactions whilst, at the same time, using them as a tactic of racialised aggression and abuse.

In street markets these learned language skills were also mobilised as part of business practices alongside more casual kinds of socialising. As explored in Chapter Four, multilingual tensions played a key role in the functioning of the slum economy, allowing unemployed and marginalised people to acquire both agency and autonomy. Gennaro has had a market stall in and around Garibaldi Square since 1993 so he has witnessed all the changes that have occurred there over the last two decades. Early on in the research I asked him whether it was true that Neapolitan street vendors had learned bits of Ukrainian and Arabic in order to talk with other vendors and with their new clients. He told me that, when migrants started arriving in large numbers in the late eighties and early nineties, many of them did not really speak much Italian. He and the other Italians learned some basic business words in their languages to be able to trade with them. Now, these migrants speak better Italian so it is no longer vital for them to use it, though they would remember it if needed. He told me that he has a knack for languages because he's able to understand all the Africans at Via Bologna just from their gestures and tone of voice. He said it had helped him in a number of tricky situations and to illustrate this he gave me an example of what he describes as 'reverse racism'. The traders all keep their goods in small storage depots near the market to avoid having to carry it all back and forth. One time he wanted to rent a depot together

with his friend Moussa (who I have mentioned above) and another Malian man. This man refused and had a fierce argument about it with Moussa in Bambara. Eventually Moussa explained that the man was not keen because there wasn't enough room. But Gennaro said that perhaps there was more to it and Moussa eventually admitted that the other Malian man didn't want to share a depot with Gennaro because he thought Neapolitans were dishonest and made problems for everyone. Gennaro said he was totally astonished and hurt by this. He stayed friends with Moussa and went on to rent a space together with Comfort, a Nigerian woman with a stall at Via Bologna market. But even there they had problems. Initially the Nigerian lady who was renting the space out, on behalf of an Italian owner, had asked for three hundred euros, but in the end she asked for five hundred: 'In the end,' he said to me, crossing his fingers together in a steeple, 'we're all linked to each other. It's just that sometimes things don't work out.' He told me that at Porta Capuana market many of the Italian stall owners had hired foreigners who had all learned to conduct trade in Neapolitan. For example, over the years they had learned to use Neapolitan slang for money such as: *n'a triglia rossa* (a red mullet) = 10,000 lira, *o'caravaggio* = 100,000 lira, *o'babà*<sup>23</sup> = 50 euros. A lot of other West African traders had also learned to talk Neapolitan in the market. This evidence of extensive linguistic transmission and hybridisation over many years proved to him that Neapolitans were not racist. He was happy for the state to allow people to come to Italy but felt they also needed to find them something to do to prevent all the 'Lybians'<sup>24</sup> put their money together to make a market stall and threatening his livelihood. 'In the end there will be more people selling things than buying them!' he

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<sup>23</sup> A babà is a typical and much-loved Neapolitan sweet which is similar to a choux pastry but injected with desert rum.

<sup>24</sup> He is referring to the predominantly West and Central African refugees who arrived from Libya and were temporarily housed in hotels around Garibaldi Square at the time.

told me. He complained that market traders were already seen as second-grade citizens in Naples and their dignity was being further undermined by the presence of unlicenced and undocumented vendors.



*Figure 25: The stall, the market and the pavement. Photo by Gennaro, (March 2012)*

**Gennaro:** This photo (see above) shows the market behind us with the pavement in front and the railings along the side of the pavement where all the people sit who have nothing to do from the morning to the evening! This is because they are what you would call, quote unquote, refugees who should have some kind of job or some way to contribute. At the moment this is only – how can I describe it – a waiting room. So in the market there are also people who are waiting for some decision to be made about their lives. May be they'll be future market vendors. Who knows? And they're in the middle of everyone else, doing nothing. In the hotels obviously they –

**Me:** So what effect do you think they have hanging around the market?

**Gennaro:** Well I think it has a negative effect. Because those people who go by and don't know anything about this situation, you know? Seeing all these people hanging around, like from one moment to the next something could kick off... well it might even scare them. Get scared because they might understand one thing for another,

you know what I mean? So in terms of first impressions, I would say that it does nothing for the market. In fact it has a negative impact. Because people get scared and then –

**Me:** So you think that, being refugees, they're more quick to lose their temper?

**Gennaro:** Well yeah... Don't they look more tense to you? And you know there have been times when there has been a lot of anger being expressed because, according to stuff they themselves have told other people I know, things weren't going well in the hotels. They felt like they were being mistreated, I dunno –

**Me:** So you took this shot because –

**Gennaro:** Yeah, because I wanted people to know that there's a market here and people doing business.

So, for Gennaro, language-crossing practices, and the pedagogic performances that accompanied them, were associated with the socio-economic necessities of getting by in a cosmopolitan and globalised reality where both migrants and Neapolitans earned money side by side through some sort of retail activity. This connected Naples to other global port cities which have become sites of a 'practical cosmopolitanism born of an acceptance of – and indifference to – difference'. As Trotter has pointed out, a pragmatic approach to living with difference involves the development of particular forms of 'cultural dexterity' and learning how to negotiate and barter in many different languages (Trotter 2008a, pp.684-5; 2008b, p.87). Schmoll has also testified in her work about transnational commercial practices in Naples, that the new cosmopolitanism Gennaro was describing sits alongside the myth of older forms of contact that generate both a porous openness to change as well as a closing off from it (2003, p.1). Gennaro showed an acute awareness of the ways his own Neapolitan otherness coded him as dishonest or tricky, and that fed into his understanding of the ways he described himself

as inevitably intertwined with the people around him, for better or worse. At the same time he relied on an idealised cosmopolitan argument about multilingual market talk as a way to shut down more a complicated discussion about how race was articulated in the city. It is obviously unacceptable to be essentialised and patronised, in the way he was by the Malian street vendor who refused to share a depot with him. But in terms of the wider national and international politics about migration their positionalities were not equal. As his photo, and our subsequent discussion about the photo above, show, he was very aware of the relations of power and force that were threatening his material and symbolic survival. At the same time as he was expressing transnational solidarity, and multicultural celebration, the figure of the dubious ‘Lybian’ refugee acted as a convenient scapegoat for the moral and economic threat he was facing that needed to be somehow controlled and managed.

### *‘A Varc’è Matalena or Magdalen’s Boat*

This part of the chapter deals with the ways that talk about talk in Naples allowed my research participants to deal with a sense of loss of Naples as it used to be as well as express the anxieties they felt about their social, economic and political futures. The collision between a historically-inflected local identity and a politically-fraught globalised migration often inspired a retreat into more essentialising conceptions of belonging. But at the same time it generated a sense of being able to live with difference horizontally and productively. Thus, ‘chthonic’ manifestations of a rooted sense of belonging – that rotated dialogically around questions of citizenship or cosmopolitanism – vied for prominence alongside more a more open and accepting cohabitation, or Relation, with difference (Geschiere 2009, pp.2-3; Glissant 1981, 1997; Yuval-Davis 2011, pp.18-30). The undercurrent of these reflections about belonging and Neapolitan

identity related to the question of generational differences and how culture was being transmitted to the younger generation.

This first interchange happened in the middle of a fierce argument about the most recent Naples versus Inter football match between Gennaro and his Italian friend Augusto who lived locally and attended the same Evangelical church:

**Augusto:** Sprechen sie Deutsch?

**Me:** No, zero Deutsch I'm afraid.

**Gennaro:** German is the language of angry people! It's an angry language!

**Augusto:** Yeah! When I hear all that 'ich'... 'mach'... It's angry.

**Me:** So you think a language shows the personality of the people who speak it? In that case what are English people like?

**Gennaro:** Well... a bit nicer at least! Ok look for me this is how it is: French is a language I really like, then Spanish and then Italian. Then I would like to speak English because they speak it all over the world. But you know it really gets me... when women speak Spanish... how can I put this? It's a language you speak with your tongue between your teeth–

**Me:** You mean it's sexy?

**Gennaro:** Ehum... well (**embarrassed**)... And then French is musical –

**Augusto:** And Neapolitan is like African – *you sing it...* Us lot, you know – Neapolitans, Africans, Arabs... we sing our words, like *ei!* Or *uagliò!* (**ways of calling people's attention**) It's like it's sung... you know: *sung!*

...

**Augusto:** (following a short pause when I explain that I am recording him and tell him about my research project) Yeah I'm happy for you to record. It's just

good I know as I sometimes like to take the opportunity to talk about God as well. I'm a sociable person anyway.

**Gennaro:** He's like me. He's got Neapolitan blood in his DNA so he's naturally friendly.

**Augusto:** Yeah Neapolitan people are all like that, like they're clowns, but people appreciate that. Deep down Neapolitan people are just friendly dumbasses.

**Me:** What do you mean?

**Augusto:** You know, a fool, a *babà*?

**Me:** Hold on, hold on! You're saying *babà* means dumbass? I thought it meant fifty euros? (I look at Gennaro referring to our conversation about dialect terms for money from the previous week)

**Gennaro:** No! (laughing) Ok, look. *Babà* are good to eat so it means good-hearted... it means you're a really good person. It's the same thing as the money!

**Augusto:** it means you let people have one over on you. (He uses the Italian verb 'abbindolare').

**Gennaro:** No, look. We are streetwise people but we are a people that resign themselves. Something bad happens and it's all: 'ok let's see' and 'what can you do?', 'Things'll get better', 'let's wait and see'... And other people don't do that! We just let the big things go even if in our daily lives we are clever and tricky – because when someone says 'Oh you're Neapolitan are you?!" they mean 'you're a thief!', 'cause all of us Neapolitans are thieves – but really we just have our eyes wide open, you get what I'm saying?

**Me:** In English we say streetwise, which means you know how to handle yourself.

**Gennaro:** Exactly. Because that's where we live our lives. The street's where we get all our experiences.

**Augusto:** But, you know, this thing of people having one over on you – it's come into popular talk now to mean that you let yourself get taken advantage of.

**Gennaro:** No, but I'm talking politically too!

**Augusto:** Yeah, they get done.

**Gennaro:** yeah...

**Augusto:** Anyway. The real Neapolitan doesn't even exist anymore.

**Me:** What do you mean? They've disappeared?

**Augusto:** It's all because there's this accumulation of... *the more the black race comes over here...* and it's like that in nearly all the other cities.

**Me:** well things change for good as well as bad

**Augusto:** I guess. The real Milanese doesn't exist anymore either...

**Me:** Yeah well I guess that's because Milan is full of Neapolitans!

**Gennaro:** But you know Naples was so lovely because... we used to have all these metaphors... For example, look I'll give you an example. My older daughter when she wants to get her own way she has her mum not knowing whether she's coming or going and I tend to be stricter. Then, sometimes, mum gets strict about something and she comes to me asking for whatever it is she wants. *I get fed up and tell her 'you're like Magdalen's boat!'* Oh – how can I explain that one to you – you know the thing is even she doesn't understand – *it's hard to explain but it's like a boat that bobs one way and then the other...* *it's like staying you're not steady...* you understand? *We say Magdalen's boat... you go wherever you feel like!* (**Where the current takes you**).

**Augusto:** You go in whatever direction the wind blows fastest, do you get the metaphor?

**Gennaro:** Exactly. And, you know, my daughter doesn't understand any of these things.

**Me:** Does your daughter speak Neapolitan?

**Gennaro:** She can speak it, but not like me.

**Me:** So what is your daughter to you? Is she more Italian or more Neapolitan?

**Gennaro:** So, look: I've got a strong Neapolitan accent, like him as well (**points to Augusto**). If we want to speak Italian we can but when my daughter speaks Italian you can't even hear an accent.

**Me:** How come?

**Gennaro:** Because going to school... and anyway – we've always tried to speak Italian because I can't assume that she's going to be able to stay here in Naples or if she's going to have to go to the north or some other place to work.

**Me:** Yeah, that's why my mum never let me speak dialect...

**Gennaro:** But you know if she wants to speak dialect, she can... And when I have to speak Italian sometimes I get a bit stuck because I have to do a quick bit of translation.

During this lengthy conversation a jokey interplay about the stereotypical cultural characteristics of different national languages segued into a more nostalgic territory of loss and regret that pivoted around the question of language extinction and cultural erosion. Both Gennaro and Augusto argued that the language you spoke in constituted your identity in ways that shifted between essentialised and more fluid notions of belonging. For example, Gennaro drew upon a number of familiar stereotypical notions about what national languages expressed about national cultures, but then agreed with Augusto when he likened Neapolitan to the sound of West African languages and Arabic. Then the discussion digressed smoothly and inexorably towards the question of

Naples in terms of its difficult political, economic and social climate. Augusto claimed there were no real Neapolitans anymore because of the cultural dilution that had resulted from migration, despite the fact that he had made a fraternal link to the new Other in his midst by comparing the way Africans and Neapolitans spoke. This simultaneous recognition and rejection was intimately tied to the racialisation processes Southern Italians themselves have gone through over the centuries, combined with the innate knowledge of hybridity that has come with Naples' history as a port city. Both men spoke of the pain of being stereotyped as sly thieves when they felt that Neapolitans, in reality, were good-natured and guilty only of not standing up for their rights and letting people exploit them over the centuries. If they appeared rough it was because they had been forced to toughen up in order to *arrangiare* on the streets that gave them their last chance of livelihood. The fraught connection between this wounded Neapolitan masculinity and the migration that appeared to threaten the last resorts they were clinging to, was expressed through the different ways of speaking that had previously existed, and were emerging in the age of globalisation.

Gennaro went on to express these complicated feelings slightly differently, with a melancholic and poetic nostalgia, when he told me that, 'we used to have all these metaphors...' He meant that in the Naples he grew up in there were particular ways of talking to express ideas that do not exist now or are not accessible to the younger generation. When pressed he admitted that he and his wife had not encouraged their daughters to speak Neapolitan because of the historical prejudices faced by Neapolitans who went to work in the North and abroad. Anti-southern discrimination was a very real problem faced by both internal and external Southern Italian emigrants over the twentieth century but, although these stereotypes still undoubtedly cause pain, this should not cause us to forget the fact that Italians living abroad today enjoy a significant

number of rights that are denied to those migrants coming from outside of the EU border zone (Signorelli 2006, p.36). Popular religious legend has it that Mary Magdalen crossed the Mediterranean from the Middle East to Europe in a boat with no oars. The metaphor Gennaro described using with his daughter expressed the idea of life drifting along in unpredictable waters. Without wanting to go deeply into the different arcane symbolisms at play here, it is nonetheless interesting that he used a metaphor which he felt was rooted in the Neapolitan landscape that in fact recalled cultural fluidity and foreign arrivals. In Naples people face the sea to find out who they are. The city's history of mutability and instability generated a constant productive tension between "chthonic" or 'root' identities and a hybrid and mobile 'Relation identity' (Geschière 2009, pp.2-3; Glissant 1997, p.144).

This tension between opening and closure surfaced in much of my fieldwork, evoking children and their cultural inheritance in order to explain the pain and confusion of social change and economic uncertainty. At another field site, on another day, I got chatting with Marco, a middle-aged Neapolitan friend of my research participant, Modou. We were talking about markets and Marco told me that 'Naples is dead' because all the old market areas around Piazza Garibaldi used to be full of Neapolitans running traditional markets stalls and now they are full of foreigners. 'Immigration has killed Naples,' he told me, 'immigration and emancipation'. I asked him what he meant by 'emancipation' and he told me that people have lost their fascination with the esoteric and so all the traditional Neapolitan folkloristic practices have died off. He referred specifically to the Befana, the old lady who brings children gifts on the Epiphany while they sleep: 'now children believe in Father Christmas and not in her', he said. The anxieties caused by the globalisation of US consumer culture – which Marco explained through the idea of people's 'emancipation' from the old Neapolitan

folk beliefs – combined with the intensification of global migration, stimulated an expression of fiercely protective local pride that belied Naples' own porous and mutable history.

Elsewhere other research participants were also talking to me about how their children spoke. But soil did not always speak through their words in such essentialised ways. Magdalen's boat was going this way and that, seemingly out of their control, but for them this created transgressive spaces within which to resist the cultural hegemony that related particular languages with power.



*Figure 26: African Food Store on Via Bologna, photo by author, (February 2012)*

One day, whilst doing some fieldwork at Via Bologna, I decided I felt like eating some fried plantain that evening. I went into the 'My Africa' store halfway up the road and met the owners who were Neapolitan. There was a man standing behind the meat counter at the back of the shop and a woman sitting at the till:

**Me:** Is the meat halal?

**Man:** Erm?

**Me:** I mean – can Muslims eat it?

**Man:** Oh yes! Are you Italian?

**Me:** My mum is from near Sorrento. I grew up in England though. I'm here studying and teaching English classes at the mosque in Piazza Mercato.

**Woman:** Oh well, we all need English lessons – us and the Africans! (laughter)

**Man:** I married a foreign woman too. I lived in Brasil for three years and I married my wife there and had a daughter. She hasn't learnt Portuguese but can speak Neapolitan.

**Me:** Are you pleased about that?

**Man:** Yeah – I think that's how it should be, you know? She's living here and all that...

Carlo – Modou's friend who appears above – had also had similar transnational and hybrid parenting experiences. Along with his own biological children he and his wife had also helped raise two Peruvian girls for a period when their mum was not able to care for them. Unlike my spoken Italian, which he said held no trace of a Neapolitan accent in it, and Modou's Neapolitan – which he described as 'a bit sloppy' – he and his wife had taught these two girls to speak fluent dialect, against their mother's wishes. Both these accounts showed how language ideologies were connected to discourses of power and struggle against power (Smitherman 1977). These practices of generational linguistic transmission showed how people both subverted or maintained dominant Eurocentric ideologies about appropriate and non-appropriate language use, or re-asserted localised linguistic hegemonies, through particular language tactics that established an ambiguous and mobile transcultural Relation.

## /spɪk ɪ:ŋglɪʃ/ or Speak English!

*Tu vuò fa l'Americano!*

*You're a wannabe American!*

*Comm' te pò capì chi te vuò bene*

*How can the people who love you understand you*

*Si tu parlè miez' American'?*

*If you speak half American?*

*Quann' si fa l'amor' sott'a lun'*

*And when we make love under the moon*

*Comm' te ven' ncapa e dì: I love you?* *How can you think to say: I love you?*<sup>25</sup>

*Tu vuò fa l'Americano' (1956) by Neapolitan singer-songwriter Renato Carosone, (1920 – 2001), translated into English by the author*

So far in the chapter the preoccupation with talk that I have been describing has focused on the fraught boundaries between speaking Italian or Neapolitan or the partial and playful incorporation of the languages that have arrived in Naples via current migratory routes. However there has also been a running preoccupation throughout the thesis with being able to speak English or needing to learn better English, that I would like to turn to properly now. I would like to argue that this is part of the history of Southern Italian emigration and Allied intervention in the city from 1943 (which in some ways continues to this day in the form of the NATO base). Speaking English is also connected to the significant cultural, economic and political influence that, from a distance, America wields over the lives of people worldwide. As Carosone's song shows, emigrant returnees and American soldiers, with their fashionable clothing, money and foreign speech seemed almost irresistibly glamorous to those Italians who had stayed behind. 'L'Americano' is still a common nickname given to Italians of a certain age who have travelled abroad and so are considered worldly. But this glamour is also tainted with the sadness and longing of loss and departure. As Gennaro explained (above), the fact that

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<sup>25</sup> I.e. How can you think to say I love you in English instead of saying 'ti amo' in your native language.

young Italians still often have to go abroad to search for work makes this history particularly bittersweet. I have always felt that, unsurprisingly, there is also an unacknowledged and yet fierce sense of internalised inferiority about the cultural predominance of English in Naples. When I was five or six in Italy, small boys would run after me shouting ‘Speak English! Speak English! They would pronounce it as /spik ɪ:ngliʃ/ and it would annoy me no end. One time my sister and I accompanied our cousin to a Catechism class and the whole class chanted the phrase at us for about fifteen minutes, as we got progressively more distraught, until the bewildered teacher called time early on the lesson. I don’t know if this is still a fashionable playground game but the recent sampling of Carosone’s song in the international house hit *We No Speak Americano* (YOLANDA BE COOL and DCUP, 2010) demonstrates the on-going salience of these emotions about talking English.

Putting aside those who leave, there are also very practical reasons why people who live and work in Naples need to speak English these days. As I showed in Chapter Four, basic English was often vital in market transactions between Italians and migrants or tourists, as this following excerpt shows:

**Gennaro:** (to new client looking at boxers) hey man, tell me what you’re looking for? These are large and these are small... there’s grey, white black... and this style in black and grey... is that all you need? Do you want a bag?

**Client:** Fine... I have... I have got. (He laughs indicating his bag)

**Gennaro:** Ok. Bye bye! (to me) Did you see that?

In some markets, such as Poggioreale, English was the principle language of communication between vendors and their West-African clients who came specifically to Naples to bulk-buy leather goods. Large amounts of money were exchanging hands

and this created considerable tension on both sides about whether they had understood each other properly.



Figure 27: Haggling and Negotiating at Mister Tony's stall, Poggioreale Market, photo by author (March 2012)

The above photo depicts the moment of price negotiation over the five or six bags that are lined up on the counter. I have already described the intricacies of this bartering process in Chapter Four. On this occasion Alessandro (bottom left) asked me to act as translator to help ease the process that was happening almost entirely in English. After Ade (the Nigerian man in the middle of the photo) had completed his purchase, we had a quick chat, in English, about his experiences in Italy:

**Ade:** Like you were asking me, I think one of the problems I had when I came in - because I came in from Milan - was the language problem. Because I only speak English so I found it difficult to communicate. And some people, if you talk to them and they don't know what you're saying they get angry or don't want to talk to you again. So I find it difficult to communicate and then get to the people and then know them. I walked on my own, just all by myself, just doing nothing because I can't speak with anybody. I can't talk so to find out how the people behave is difficult for

me. I can't really speak... and they can't understand me either. So it's a big problem for me!

**Me:** Are you planning to come to Italy again?

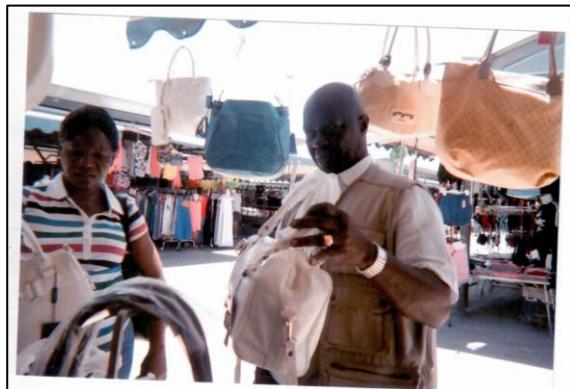
**Ade:** Oh yes. May be next year...

**Me:** And will you learn some Italian for that?

**Ade:** In marketing they should learn English because most of who they deal with are foreigners so to be able to interact and communicate. If you speak English and the customer speaks English they will find it easier to be with you. There is more from Africa coming to buy.... so it's time for them to start learning some English so they can reach out and sell more.

Some of the Italian vendors at Poggioreale market took this situation in their stride using the playful pedagogic approach that I have talked about above. When I first met Ciro and Titti of the Eddy Pell stall they exclaimed that it was great I spoke English as I could help them negotiate with all their English-speaking clients. Then they jokingly told me that I wouldn't be much good as I myself would need to learn what they called the 'dialects' of English that their clients really speak. They told me that when clients asked how much a bag cost, they knew to pronounce the 'thirty' of 'thirty four euro' as /tɜ:ti:/ not /θɜ:ti:/, as I said it. Subsequently, Titti took photos of her main types of client for me, in order to describe the different kinds of linguistic transactions she took part in at work.

1



2



3



*Figure 28: My Clients, photos by Titti, (April – June 2012)*

When I spoke to her about these three pictures she told me that the first was a general depiction of the West African clients who come to her and Ciro's stall. She told me they generally spend a lot of money and so are very important clients for them. She said that the Italian vendors generally communicated with their African clients using gestures and bits of English. On this occasion it was a very hot day and Enzo (Titti's dad) gave them some of his special cold water with lemon drink and they spent a lot more than they would have done. Initially they were just interested in belts, but then bought a load

of bags as well. She also photographed some Italian clients (photo two) and a stylist who often visits the market (photo three). This was the only photo in which she herself appeared. She told me this was because they had built up a good business relationship over the years and because she thought he was an eccentric and cool character in the market. She wasn't sure where he was from but the way he spoke English to her sounded similar to the African Americans she had also heard in Naples.

One day Titti and I were watching Alessandro (of Mister Peppe's) conduct a stressful negotiation with some West African clients and I asked her how she dealt with having to do business in a language that was not her first language. She told me she and her husband had never been scared to jump in with new languages. She put this down to the fact that they both finished school, unlike the majority of the vendors with stalls around them. It was true that Alessandro and his family did not find negotiations with foreign clients so easy. As I discussed in the last two chapters, they employed English-speaking help on their stall but often lost their temper when those employees didn't respond quickly enough or correctly understand their Italian instructions. Often I would see both Alessandro and his dad Peppe shout 'when are you going to learn some Italian, eh?!" at their staff before repeating the same command in a louder and more menacing tone. The following is a conversation between Peppe and I just after another large sale of bags and an angry miscommunication with Anton, the Ukrainian man they employ:

**Me:** Is it stressful to haggle with Africans then?

**Peppe:** Well you know...

**Me:** Is it the language thing or their methods, or both?

**Peppe:** No it's because they're much more... For me it's about something else.

**Me:** Well I guess you're used to it by now.

**Peppe:** You should see what they do! They buy thirty bags and then another one of them will want the bags and then it's all 'No I got them! Anyway... then you put them to one side and tot up the bill and then it's all 'wait a minute!' And then they pick one bag up and remove another and in the end they don't want any of them and they've convinced someone else to buy them. Then, sometimes we take the sold bags straight to the hotel. When we get there, out of thirty to fifty bags – all made of leather that you have sold and brought all the way there – all of a sudden they try to return thirty of them. You know, you've bought fifty bags and not let anyone else buy them then you have them bought to the hotel where you can get comfortable and have another look at them. I won't have that! You've already spent two hours looking at them in the market! I'm telling you... But then there's other people that are... good clients... they come and buy thirty bags straight up.

... You know the language thing is so important for us though...

**Me:** The fact that you need it to work?

**Peppe:** No I mean the fact of having to communicate with them... We get angry because... well... my son knows a thing or two but not much really... *you get me?*  
*What can you do?*

**Me:** I understand. Everyone who comes to buy speaks English or French.

**Peppe:** Yeah... but you know: there's also quite a few of them that know a bit of Italian. Quite a few... I just wish I was twenty years younger so I could go off and learn English. You know it's always been like this... that English has been spoken here... we knew we should get studying English. But in our day our parents, well, we just didn't go to school. My son also didn't want to do any type of studying and he's raising his own son this way as well, because my grandson doesn't want to study. It's always a cause of big arguments...

Talk about talking English re-awakened latent memories of emigration and foreign influence in Naples, as well as encapsulating the stress of participation in the global economy. As such it was an extremely potent indicator of the way Naples' past collided with its present, revealing the ideological struggle inherent in the use and meaning of language (Maybin 2001, p.64). The above fieldwork encounters also revealed the contingent and uneven workings of power and appropriation. The vendors at Poggioreale spoke English to their English-speaking clients because they had to but not all of them would make the effort to translate cultural differences or communicate respectfully with their foreign staff. This was because people were positioned in different ways according to ambivalent and shifting hierarchies of wealth and status. Comic language could temporarily suspend those hierarchies, as Titti and Ciro's joking comparison between Nigerian English and Standard English did, and allow new horizontal conceptions of diversity to appear. But this 'familiar speech' could often descend into abusive and oppressive language, as with Alessandro and Peppe and the way in which they wielded their linguistic frustrations against their foreign staff. Ade's attitude about the client knowing best also struck me as quite essentialising. The multilingual transactional nature of market life at Poggioreale was a matter of fact and, as Peppe notes, many of the people who go to buy there have also made the effort to learn some Italian and ease this daily Relation over bags, shoes and purses.

## Concluding Thoughts

I was fascinated by the almost compulsive way in which people talked about talk throughout the fieldwork. In the first two parts of the chapter I explored how talking about talking allowed people to negotiate spaces for the exploration of difference, either by using linguistic difference as a basis for formal and informal cultural mediations, or by seeing them as an opportunity for learning and sharing. In the second two parts of the chapter I examined how talk about talk enabled people to come to terms with the difficult social realities that Neapolitans were faced with, caught up in a global market over which they had no control and faced with difficult choices both for themselves and for their children. These transcultural practices were both convivial and conflictual, reflecting Voloshinov's description of the ambivalent dialogical nature of the utterance (1986, pp.23-4). Likewise, moments of linguistic tragedy and comedy are some of the earliest and vivid memories I have of my life and have framed the way I see the world. Talk about talk in Naples reimagines intersubjective social processes through a tireless interactive and reciprocal dialogism that can renew or destroy the Relation between people. Daily, mundane transcultural meaning-making is anxious, painful, dislocating and, occasionally, humiliating. But there is also a refreshing and playful openness to the vertigo induced by Babel showing how the hybrid Counterpoetics of Relation, that Glissant evokes in his work, are also at work rebuilding the fallen tower that divides us (Glissant 1981, pp.627-8; 1997, p.25). These are not unwitting practices but based on a particular knowledge and understanding about what language means and what words can do. In the following chapter I turn to those moments when the transcultural positive fails, and communication occurs, though as a result of breakdown and rejection.

## Chapter Seven: Not Talking At All

One Sunday morning in June, I was taking the Circumvesuviana train back down the coast from Naples to spend some time with my family in Vico. I got onto a compartment that was already filling up with tourists and Neapolitan beach-goers. Getting on just in front of me was a South Asian family, dressed elegantly for what seemed to be their day off. There were two couples and the women were wearing shalwar kameez. Both were also wearing hijab and one of the women wore a niqab. They had three young children in pushchairs which they positioned in the aisles as they sat down next to their husbands. A teenage boy, sitting in a large and boisterous group behind me, turned to his friends and joked, in Neapolitan: '*the terrorists are here!*' I turned to stare at him as his friends laughed. He ignored me and repeated, '*the terrorists are here.*' The train continued to fill up with more tourists, judging by their accents, from America, Northern Europe and Japan; middle-aged Ukrainian women in groups; Bangladeshi and Senegalese street vendors weighed down with plastic sacks of merchandise and cardboard boxes to make up makeshift stalls at the entrances to the beach resorts of the Amalfi Coast. The boy spoke again, '*Can I say something? It looks like the foreigners here are us!*' More giggles and murmurs of assent erupted from his group of friends. As the train set off, the group of teenagers behind me started playing techno house from one of their mobiles and many of the tourists started chatting animatedly to their travel companions. English, Spanish and Japanese could clearly be heard mingling with Neapolitan, Ukrainian, Wolof, Bengali and so forth, set off by the tinny beat issuing forth from the young Neapolitan's phone. The multilingual babel of people speaking with and across each other sparked something off for the young man, keen to further entertain his receptive peer group. He turned to a young American

woman and asked her in accented English, ‘where are you from?’ Without waiting for her reply he told his friends, in knowing tones, ‘she is a beautiful girl’. Then, to a young Spanish woman, he said, ‘como estas?’ And then he swiftly, shouted ‘Arigato’, presumably for the benefit of the groups of Japanese tourists on their way to Pompei. A young American woman suddenly exclaimed, ‘Oh my God!’ in response to something her friend had said. The boy immediately mimicked her, shouting ‘Oh maaaaaaaaaiiy Gooooood! It is wonderful!’ in drawn out tones. His friends laughed hysterically. The group exited the train a few stops after this outburst and the American woman commented, ‘that boy was so sweet!’ She didn’t seem to have realised he was mocking her or perhaps felt his comments were complimentary. The hum of conversation then resumed and we continued with our journey.

This episode goes to show how you talk – or don’t talk – to different people in different ways. The performance of talking *about* the South Asian family – within their earshot and using recognisable racist stereotypes about Muslims, but in a thick dialect that was designed to be deliberately incomprehensible and so vaguely threatening – jarred starkly with the effort the young Neapolitan made to showcase his linguistic aptitude in the languages of the privileged and wealthy groups of tourists. In both speeches made by the young man, it was the women who were the objects of his racialised and sexualised commentary. The South Asians were described as terrorists because of the hijab the women were wearing, with all the connotations of masculine oppression and erotic desire that are connected to Islamic femininity and dress. The flirtatious language invoked with regard to the female tourists was a familiar script for me, having grown up spending my summers in the south and being regularly propositioned by local boys on the street. Like this boy, they always seemed to know a few set phrases in a number of key languages, like English, French, Spanish and German. They targeted female tourists

(and female tourists targeted them) for summer romances, and I have often heard stories about furious local girlfriends being replaced over the summer with northern European and American dalliances. Being able to speak English or French to the visiting young women connected the young Neapolitan men to the upward mobility that the women represented. But the sharpness in the young man's mockery on the Circumvesuviana also revealed the fraught combination of resentment, attraction, shame, cool and uncool inherent in such interactions. Hierarchical 'language attitudes' (Smitherman 1977, p.199) were in place that allowed the young man to use language in a simple way as a tool of oppression against the vulnerable group of South Asian Others on the train. But at the same time his interactions with the tourists showed how aware he was that his own language and culture had always been used against him as a tool of oppression. Following Mbembe's (2001, pp.13-15) argument about subordinated masculinity and attendant processes of brutalisation, the boy's communication could be understood as a way of winning back some sort of agency and autonomy after having bought into, and internalised, racialised hierarchies that affected him as well as the migrants on board the train. It's not easy to describe either of the boy's speeches as dialogical and reciprocal instances of intersubjective communication. They were certainly a reflection upon belonging and racialised disorientation in the face of difference, that the boy's friends appreciated and responded to. But really no one was talking to each other at all.

This chapter is about communication breakdown and seeking to define the threshold where the processes of transcultural interaction and negotiation I have been describing in the previous three chapters reach the edge of sociality and fail. The patterns of culture and communication related to Naples' history as a port suggest that we all speak, even under unequal, improvisational and ambiguous conditions. But it also matters politically when interaction falls apart if we are going to understand something about the particular

articulations of race and racism in the city. As Bakhtin has explained, the attitude of the speaker towards the Other reveals a lot about what is at stake in the act of speaking, or not speaking to them (1986, p.97). Here I particularly focus on the ways in which language attitudes join stereotypical notions of difference and ‘chthonic’ formulations of belonging (Geschiere 2009) to structure moments of breakdown in understanding between Neapolitans and vulnerable migrants on Neapolitan streets. In part one I examine a number of instances of racialised insults and aggressions that allow me to reflect upon the ways in which non-Neapolitans – and particularly some groups of migrants – are systemically silenced and oppressed by racism and racist ideas about language and culture (Ayim 1997, p.200; Smitherman 1977). In part two I look at what is at stake when people claim they are not able to understand the Other’s speech. Finally, in part three, I explore what it means to refuse to believe the Other can understand what you’re saying to them. I am thinking about these processes collectively as ‘not talking at all’, whereby Glissant’s (1981; 1997) ideas about a pulsation towards a monolingual nationalism, based on chthonic ideas of belonging, generates particular forms of linguistic violence, domination and rejection that deny the possibilities opened up by a daily multilingual Relation.

## Insults That Deny Reply



*Figure 29: Egg on the Pavement at Via Bologna, photo by author (April 25<sup>th</sup> 2012)*

The day that Via Bologna market re-opened, (a) frustrated local resident(s) who had clearly been hoping the market would stay closed down, threw eggs down at the vendors as they set their stalls up first thing in the morning. As the above photo shows, the egg-thrower(s) chose to communicate their discontent without speech, but with a simple gesture of disgust that denied any possibility of dialogue, as it was not clear who exactly was responsible. The image of egg yolk and broken shell documents the levels of racialised tension between stall-holders and local residents at Via Bologna at the time. I was told that residents threw water down on the vendors when they first started the market a decade previously, but over time things had calmed now. Now it was happening again. As I have discussed in the previous chapters, an everyday multilingual Relation generally allowed people encountering each other in the public space of the street market to make a living, form interpersonal relationships and negotiate ideas about difference. These transcultural interactions were often ambiguous and unequal,

but they generally aimed to avoid misunderstanding and conflict. The photo above shows that this was not always the case. The message was being communicated, but without creating the possibility of dialogue.

A particular sort of communication breakdown seemed to affect the interactions between Neapolitans and Bangladeshi street vendors in Naples. They were the people I most commonly saw, and heard about, falling victim to violent episodes of street racism. Often, they would seek protection from black street vendors, who worked alongside them but were not subjected to the same regular casual and regular mistreatment on the part of Neapolitans. This would seem to reflect a postcolonial logic of alterity – whereby Asian men are physically weaker and effeminate so easier to victimise – that is common to other contexts. This demonstrates the way in which colonial ideas and images have travelled across Europe and the West.

In the space of street market, this meant that often the market calls of Bangladeshi street vendors were badly received by the potential customers they were calling out to. One day in December I was passing through Piazza del Plebiscito, in the historic centre of the city, when it started to rain heavily. An itinerant Bangladeshi vendor appeared with a trolley of umbrellas and started to circulate. He called out to a young man fleeing the downpour, holding out an umbrella to him: '*hey, man!*' The man responded aggressively, physically pushing the man away and shouting, '*Hey! Leave it out!*' The Bangladeshi also remonstrated and the man ignored him, hurrying away.

On another occasion I was walking past Piazza Garibaldi train station on a rainy day in April when I saw an elderly Neapolitan, drunkenly approaching a Bangladeshi umbrella hawker, standing with his trolley outside the steps down to the metro. The old man brandished a smashed glass bottle in the vendor's face and shouted brokenly at him:

‘*Why don’t you go back to the toilet you came from?!*’ The unfortunate man shrunk back in fright. I was with a friend and we stopped next to the altercation in case it was necessary to intervene. No one else paid any attention at all. Fortunately the homeless man immediately blundered off and left the vendor in peace.

‘*Hey man*’, a translation of the Neapolitan *guagliò* , was a common informal greeting between young people in Naples. Many vendors used the word to call out to potential customers and the decision to use Neapolitan was often successful in establishing interpersonal ties between migrants and Neapolitans, as Modou’s playful greetings showed in Chapter Four. But Bangladeshi vendors were both perceived to be unable to communicate effectively in Italian and their attempts to talk were often rebuffed aggressively. Many Neapolitans made fun of the Bangladeshi practice of selling umbrellas. They would check the weather and make sure to appear as soon as the first drops of rain start to fall in order to take advantage of the fact that people may have left the house unprepared for the elements. As itinerant vendors they circulated the city or set up pitches in many different spots, allowing them to come into contact with many more potential customers. But this could be risky. It meant they were not as familiar with their surroundings as migrant vendors who set up a pitch in the same spot every day. As a result their judgements about how to approach prospective buyers could be less acute, particularly as they were speaking Italian or Neapolitan as a second language and so less quick at picking up verbal or non-verbal cues from potential clients. Also, they were unable to rely on the implicit trust and acceptance that Neapolitan street vendors could make use of. Their selling tactics were seen as opportunistic, but they were no different to the Neapolitans who circulated the city asking people to buy lighters or tissues. Most of all they were victimised because they were seen as weak and unmanly, and this connected to ideologies about Eastern masculinity that were

developed during colonialism. The attitude of locals towards the South Asian Other in Naples changed the stakes at play in conversation leading to the likelihood of linguistic and cultural rejection (Bakhtin 1986, p.97).

Meanwhile, young Neapolitan boys would roam the pavements in groups, preying on vulnerable street vendors and women. In particular they would target Bangladeshi vendors, verbally abusing them and stealing their wares. This behaviour encompassed both the comic and abusive dimensions of the carnivalesque (Bakhtin 1984), whereby playful games – like throwing foam in people's faces during Carnevale<sup>26</sup> – could quickly turn menacing. Their raucous and festive laughter functioned in complicity with power, participating in the abuse of some of the most vulnerable members of society (Bakhtin 1984; Stallybrass and White 1986, p.19). Whilst doing fieldwork with Ibra and Salvatore I became quite familiar with a group of about a dozen of these young boys:

On the first occasion I saw them, they greeted Ibra raucously and he laughed at their high spirits, saying 'ciao, ciao'. One of them said something to me in dialect, which I didn't catch, and then he winked at Ibra. After they had passed by Ibra told me the Bangladeshi street vendors were scared of these boys because they stole things off their stalls. He told me they don't target the Senegalese vendors and I asked why: 'Afraid', responded Ibra.

A couple of weeks later I was standing with Salvatore when a group of them rushed the stall of a young Bangladeshi vendor, who had set up next to Ibra that day, and stole a mobile phone cover. They ran away really fast and Salvatore told me this was the fourth

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<sup>26</sup> Carnevale (Carnival) is a catholic festival celebrated just before the start of Lent, where people customarily fast. People don masks and costumes and have a big party. Its roots are ancient and predate Christianity. Previously called Saturnalia, it used to be the festival of slaves and servants.

time they had targeted this vendor since the morning. He told me it was always different boys and they did it for fun, throwing the phone covers away once they got round the corner. He commented wryly that the young vendor had sold less than had been stolen from him that day. We went over to stand with the man and commiserate with him, although we didn't have any language in common as he spoke very little Italian and we had no Bengali at all. Salvatore got frustrated with this: 'he doesn't understand anything. He just says 'sì sì sì'. *When are you gonna learn some Italian?*' Salvatore told me he had recently offered this vendor a television he didn't need anymore and it had been really difficult to decide how and when to pick it up as they couldn't understand each other very easily. In the end he came to get it ten minutes before Salvatore finished work and Salvatore had to insist that he went and got one of his friends to help him carry it away. He told me that he had suspected the man would have difficulty carrying it because he thought Bangladeshi men were all physically slight and so less strong. In fact, he told me, he and his friend had struggled with holding the heavy television between them. The friend he brought with him spoke good Italian as he had been in Italy for a while. Salvatore noted that at least he would be able to defend himself when the groups of boys came by.

At this point in our conversation another group of boys appeared and Salvatore approached them saying, '*Go away, leave it!*' The boys heeded Salvatore's warning and moved on, only to stop by the stall of Samba, an elderly Senegalese vendor. The man in question immediately jumped up and approached the boys aggressively, causing them to run off. I mentioned to Salvatore that they had avoided Ibra completely and then run away from Samba, and Salvatore responded that they were afraid of the Senegalese men. The group of boys who had just passed us now appeared to be having a disagreement. They all turned as one and headed back toward us. The atmosphere

cooled sharply and Salvatore started talking to them softly with his hands held out towards them, telling them to leave it alone and that they needed to behave themselves. Again they moved on past us like a wave. Salvatore resumed our discussion, telling me that these boys were from a historically poor neighbourhood to the north of the road we were standing on. Their parents were unemployed, or in prison for offences associated with the Camorra. These young boys were abandoned to themselves and so lived a ‘street life’, maybe eventually taking similar paths in life to their parents.

Meanwhile the Bangladeshi vendor brought over a fifty euro note and motioned to Salvatore to check whether it was a fake. The young couple who were waiting for their change next to his stall looked offended. The Bangladeshi man said thank you and then went back to the couple to give them their change without taking back the large note. Salvatore said, ‘thanks for the money!’ and laughed, together with Ibra. The vendor smiled ruefully and came back with hands outstretched for the note, but Salvatore waved the money in the air above the man’s men. He immediately dropped his arms down and took a step back as if intimidated. At this, Salvatore became repentant and said to me, ‘look he makes you feel sorry for him’, giving the money back. Salvatore turned to me and said angrily, ‘they have to worry about police. They have to worry about the kids. And now they have to worry about the fake money. What do they come here for? Why don’t they go back to where they came from?’ I responded that they may well be asking themselves that very same thing, but Salvatore morosely responded that, ‘no they have to be thinking they’re better off here’.

Whilst all this was happening, the same boys as before were arguing about five metres away from us. They had found a long steel rod and were trying to break it in half. I started to feel scared and asked Salvatore what he thought they were going to do.

Salvatore responded reassuringly that, 'you just have to know how to take them', and commented that it was a shame for them that they might do something bad before understanding the consequences of their actions. 'Write all this in your book,' he told me. Ibra started packing up his stall to go home and, as usual, I went over to help. Two boys then suddenly rushed at the Bangladeshi vendor who grabbed his mobile stall and wheeled it as fast as possible towards Salvatore who was standing at the entrance of the apartment block he worked in. Standing behind Salvatore in the doorway he was relatively safe. They boys surrounded Salvatore who held his hands out again, trying to reason with them. After a few seconds they all moved off. Ibra and I approached them to see if they were okay and Salvatore told the vendor, '*you gotta go home. Do you understand? They're gonna come back!*' Ibra pointed out that the street was emptying itself of vendors. Belatedly the Bangladeshi vendor realised he was going to be alone on the pavement. He started to pack up his stall but Salvatore anxiously complained that he was taking too long and the boys would come back. We all helped him bunch together phone cases with elastic bands and pack them into a large white raffia sack hung round a trolley. About five minutes later he was all packed up and he thanked us before heading off down the road.

The boys came back again whilst I was there, about a week or so later. They surrounded the same Bangladeshi vendor as before and followed him as he escaped to hide behind Salvatore. One boy told him, '*I'll smash your face in. Aren't you ugly.*' They didn't take things any further and stalked off.

The differential treatment meted out to street vendors by the young people was reflective of more widely spread attitudes about difference and positionality in the city. Racialised hierarchies of masculinity – in which South Asian men were positioned as

weak and effeminate and African men as physically strong and aggressive – were central to this. The behaviour of the young boys mirrored the stereotypical assertions about different masculinity that Salvatore regularly voiced throughout the work we did together (see particularly Chapter Five). The wink and cheeky comment made about me to Ibra at the beginning of this episode also showed the ways in which, as a young woman, I was also positioned within the power dynamics of the pavement.

For Salvatore, being unable to speak Italian was at the root of the oppressive treatment Bangladeshi vendors received, as it left them vulnerable and unable to speak back. The language attitude he had about Bangladeshi vendors made him believe it was too difficult to communicate effectively with them and connected with his racist ideologies about South Asian men. This assumption of linguistic and racial weakness is at the root of the systematic campaign of aggression and violent silencing that the boys performed as well. However, whilst disdaining them, Salvatore also made small efforts to minimise the harm being caused by the groups of young people. He recognised the damaging effects of their behavior, and the tragic social and economic context in which they had taken root, and this was why he told me to ‘write this all down in your book’. The Bangladeshi vendor recognised this, and took advantage of Salvatore for protection, but their interactions never really transcended the trope of their not being able to talk to each other.

The competing power of both the state and the police formed the backdrop to these unpleasant everyday interactions. Regular police raids and a national anti-immigration politics caused Salvatore to reflect upon how difficult life was made for migrants in Italy, making him ask why they came here at all. Equally, as D’Alessandro notes (2009, p.442), the connection between forms of consumption and the role exercised by the

Camorra in commercial activity has generated lifestyles and identities that are extremely attractive to people not involved with organised criminality. This is particularly true in the case of some young people living in areas conditioned by a strong Camorra presence. The young boys' activities emulated the Camorra style by emulating a masculine *guappo* masculinity that was acquired through fearless performances of aggression and a disregard for the law.

### Not Understanding the Other

During fieldwork it became clear to me that communication breakdown across transcultural boundaries was racialised and racialising in ways that went beyond racist insults and silencing. People decided they couldn't understand the Other, when it was clear what they were communicating, and this refusal was connected to a fear of their difference as much as to a proteophobic fear (Bauman 1993, pp.164-5) of their unsettling and undefinable familiarity.

Early in my research I was taken by Luisa, the mother of one of my gatekeepers, to Duchesca market. This market runs through the back streets behind the statue of Garibaldi in Piazza Garibaldi and is famous for predominantly selling contraband and stolen items. The vendors are predominantly Neapolitan and West African and the atmosphere in the market is tense and circumspect. Luisa wanted to introduce me to her nephew, Gianni, who sold labelled jumpers. We approached his stall and they greeted each other affectionately as they hadn't seen each other in a while. She told him I was doing a project about markets in Naples and asked him how the Italians and the foreigners got on with each other in the Duchescsa: 'No, we don't get on at all', he responded, his mouth turning down at the corners. But at this moment a black man appeared behind him and asked Luisa, 'are you his mum?' 'No. I'm the aunty,' she

responded, ‘so you know Gianni?’ The man responded, smiling, ‘this is my brother!’ Gianni nodded in acknowledgement of his presence, but did not smile back. Luisa encouraged me to tell the man about my work. As I was speaking he became more and more withdrawn, ‘sorry, no understand,’ he told me. He pointed to another African man with a stall opposite Gianni’s and told me to explain to him. I started speaking, trying both Italian and French, but again the man told me he couldn’t understand me, and passed me on. The third man I spoke to introduced himself as Abdou and smiled encouragingly at me. He got out his work visa for me, ostensibly to show me how to spell his name but really, I suspect, to prove he had a right to remain in the country. Abdou told me I was welcome to come back at any time and hang on his stall. We swapped numbers and Luisa and I went back to Gianni’s stall to say goodbye. Gianni also said I could come and do fieldwork with him, but he thought I should sit with him and not with the African vendors. I never ended up doing further fieldwork at Duchesca market. The market was subjected to a series of police raids and I decided I didn’t feel safe spending extended periods of time there.

Here the denials of understanding on the part of the three West African vendors I spoke to were revelatory of the threat I represented as an unknown interloper into a market where activities were happening that might be better off not subjected to excessive scrutiny. Negotiating this was a key part of gaining access and managing risk in the field for me. Throughout my fieldwork, I noticed that claiming to not understand was a key strategy used by migrants, particularly when authority figures were exercising control over them. In this case I was making them anxious, as they weren’t sure who I was or where I came from so it was better for them to avoid responding directly to my explanations and questions. Where the silence of the Other can indicate a violent disempowering, as discussed in the last part of this chapter, Glissant argues it can also

indicate resistance as the loss of language that takes place interrupts the flow of the dominant discourse and forces intersubjective interactions to become opaque and unclear. Opacity provides protection from the surveillance of the oppressor when the face-to-face of daily Relation becomes impossible (Britton 1999, pp.19-25; Glissant 1981, pp.14-19; 1997, pp.114, 190). Thus the inability or unwillingness to understand the migrant Other gets turned against the oppressor through these tactical approaches to not talking. At the same time, as Scott notes, this 'linguistic veiling' also helps to fuel stereotypes about subaltern people being unable to speak or be understood (Scott 1990, pp.32-36).

Gianni's refusal to acknowledge and speak to the African man that approached us as we were talking was a different sort of not understanding; it was an ideological refusal to recognise him as a fully-fledged fellow person. His evident dislike of working alongside black street vendors was compounded by my presence, a young white woman and therefore symbolic of the threat of black masculinity and miscegenation. The African man's use of kinship titles was a failed attempt to establish a convivial Relation, as '*ò frà*', or 'my brother', are common ways of addressing male companions both in Naples and across West Africa. Gianni refused to talk back to him and the potential for a moment of intersubjective Relation was refused.

On other occasions the fraught politics surrounding understanding and not understanding across transcultural boundaries led to paranoia and distrust:

I had been doing fieldwork regularly for a few weeks and was standing with Comfort at her stall in its original position at the head of Via Bologna, listening sympathetically to her complaints about the ongoing insecurities about the future of the market. Omar arrived and she started directing her discontent towards him, until

she received a call telling her that there was trouble back home in Nigeria (connected to the activities of Boko Haram) and she rushed off to a nearby phone centre to call her family there. There was a general upheaval and panic around us as other Nigerians in the market also rushed off to make calls and, at the same moment, an approaching police patrol caused the Guinean street vendors at the top of Via Bologna to run away into the back streets of the Vasto neighbourhood. Omar and I started talking about the laws surrounding the production and sale of contraband. Then, two Senegalese vendors with stalls within the market approached Omar and started speaking to him angrily in Wolof. The argument got heated and I caught French words like 'antiracisme' and 'Angleterre' coming from Omar and suspected that they were arguing about my presence in the market. Everyone else who didn't speak Wolof, including Comfort returning from her phone call, watched on in confusion. A Neapolitan man asked Comfort what they were saying and she told him that she didn't understand. The man looked affronted and commented that, 'it's not possible', with rancour in his voice, as if he believed she was deliberately keeping the information from him. After a few more minutes of discussion Omar seemed to sufficiently calm and reassure the two Senegalese vendors who returned to their stalls, still visibly fuming. Omar told me they had heard our discussion about contraband and were convinced I was a councillor spying on them from City Hall. He had had to work hard to convince them of my true identity and good intentions.

Different racialised language attitudes were working compatibly together in the above episode to foment transcultural paranoia and distrust. The Neapolitan man who questioned Comfort about the argument assumed she understood because he assumed that all the Africans at the market spoke the same language or were in some way all the same as each other. Gennaro, who had a stall within the market, was well aware that

there were different nationalities amongst the African vendors there, and was sensitive to the tensions of cross-cultural communication that often arose. The man's assumption of linguistic homogeneity had its roots in colonial constructions of a 'dark continent' without history or cultural diversity that, in the case of the man above, had not been disrupted by daily convivial interaction along the pavement. Nestling alongside this was the common assumption that people talking in a language you don't understand are automatically a threat to you. This was connected to a monolingual nationalism that equated the speaking of foreign languages with a refusal to participate honestly and equally in national culture. It has often fed up to a national language politics whereby language tests can be one of the conditions of entry to the national soil and multilingual speaking practices are punished in official structures like schools. The reality is that all communication is multilingual. The French-inflected Wolof of the angry Senegalese market vendors, as well Neapolitan-inflected Italian used by Comfort, Omar, the Neapolitan man and myself in the above scene, all attested to the ways in which we could use different semiotic resources, both within and without of conventionally-defined languages, in order to construct meaning together in dialogue. The linguistic choices we all made were 'acts of identity' whereby community could be made or broken through 'semantic guerilla tactics' (Hewitt 1986, pp.205; Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985). The fact that simplified and stereotypical ideas about language-speaking – such as the paranoid resentment of not being able to understand the other – could co-exist alongside the complex, multiaccentual and lived realities of language use, demonstrated the strength of language ideologies and their obsessive link to power interests, boundary maintenance and group membership (Smitherman 1997).



*Figure 30: Roma Performers on Circumvesuviana, photo by author (August 2013)*

On another occasion I was travelling back from Vico to Naples on the Circumvesuviana, having spent the weekend at home, when I saw another case of not understanding taking place. I was sitting opposite a young British couple who looked like the quintessential young people ‘going travelling’ with their large backpacks between their legs. The train was very crowded, with many people standing in the aisles. At Pioppaino station a group of three young Roma men got on holding instruments. One played a harpsichord, another beat a tambourine, whilst the third man began to sing a series of popular neomelodic Neapolitan songs in time with the music. These are very common scenes on public transport, as can be seen in the above photo, taken with permission on a different occasion. However, this time, the young man’s voice was so spectacular that everybody stopped talking, examining their phones, or reading, and sat up to listen. A Neapolitan man standing in the aisle next to the British couple and I leaned in and asked them, in English:

**Neapolitan Man:** Do you like the song?

**British Man:** Very much (his girlfriend nods enthusiastically).

**Neapolitan Man:** (shaking his head dismissively) But they are not Italian.

**British man:** (surprised) They aren't?

**Neapolitan Man:** They are Romanian.

**British Woman:** (leaning in to male companion) Where did he say they're from?

**British Man:** Romania.

**British Woman:** Oh!

**Neapolitan Man:** They are Romanian, Ukrainian, I don't know!

The Roma man stopped singing and started making his way down the crowded carriage holding out a plastic cup and saying, 'Thanks... some change please... many thanks!' His spoken Italian, just like his sung Neapolitan, appeared native to me. I assumed he must have either grown up in the south or belong to a Roma community that had lived here for many generations.

**Neapolitan man:** (to British man) Tomorrow I go to London to see football: Napoli – Chelsea!

**British Man:** Oh, I'm sure Napoli will win!

**Neapolitan Man:** I... how do you say? I pray! (British man laughs) I lived in England for two years. In Leicester.

**British Man:** Oh – I'm from Leicester!

The two men immediately started talking restaurants and the merits of the Leicester Tigers. A few stops later, the Neapolitan man got off and bid the young couple goodbye.

The episode does a lot of work in depicting the complicated layers of interaction going on across transcultural boundaries in Naples. Despite his perfect Italian and dialect, the young Roma singer was denied the claim to belonging that his speaking voice made because of the way he looked and the profession he was practicing. This refusal to understand his spoken Italian or Neapolitan as *making him* Italian or Neapolitan is part of a politics of recognition that refuses to accept migrants, and particularly members of the Roma communities who may or may not be migrants, as being part of the local popular. The young Roma's complete mastery of the traditional Neapolitan songs, which so impressed many of the locals and tourists in the train carriage, engendered a proteophobic unease in the Neapolitan man, which he felt compelled to palliate by correcting the mistaken assumption of the British tourists next to him that the young Roma might be the same as him. At the same time, in speaking to the young tourists, he positioned himself as an erstwhile migrant and one-time Other on British soil. He spoke an imperfect and accented English to them as part of a tactic to demand recognition as one of them: a white European as opposed to a despised, not-quite-white, European Other. Like the episode at the beginning of this chapter, the man's approach of talking with the British couple and refusing to understand the talk of the Roma singer, slotted into an ideological hierarchy of Europeanness that was revelatory of southern Italy's precarious positionality on the racialised edge of Europe. These were the things he felt he had to do in order to be able to make a claim for belonging fully to Europe (Yuval-Davis 2011, p.20). The British couple seemed either unaware of, or too polite to protest, about the stakes involved in speaking or not speaking in this context and the racialised dimension of the Neapolitan man's dismissal of the Roma performers. Perhaps this was part and parcel of the unearned privilege of being a middle class British person going travelling. The masculine banter about sports and UK town life was a key part of the

kind of transcultural convivial sociality and claim to belonging that the Neapolitan man was trying to make. Guilefully, or guilelessly, the British man seemed happy to play along.

### Refusing to Believe the Other Understands You

Alongside a refusal to believe it was possible to understand the Other, I noticed a complementary conviction that the *I* was incomprehensible to Other as well. This reflected an ideological conceptualisation of belonging as connected to an exclusionary monolingual nationhood; as well as stereotypical language attitudes that worked to dominate and silence particular groups of migrants over others:

Amadou, Omar and I were sitting outside the bar next to Modou's stall having a coffee one day when a Neapolitan street hawker approached us, asking if we would like to buy a lighter or a notepad and pencil for a few cents. We declined politely with a tilt of our heads and then studiously ignored him while he continued to stand there: '*I have family*' he informed us plaintively. We looked at the ground. 'Do you speak Italian?' he asked us, changing tack. We didn't respond. His gaze settled on me, the only white person and the only woman at the table: 'do you speak Italian?' I capitulated and said that I did. 'No, No. I don't believe you', he said, 'you're Polish aren't you?' I raised my eyebrows at this and shrugged my shoulders. He also shrugged and walked away.

While it might have initially appeared that the street hawker wanted to know if we could speak Italian in order to communicate with us better, his reaction to my assertion that I could speak suggests that there was something rather different at stake in his question. Like the small boys that ran after me shouting 'speak English!' when I was little (see

Chapter Six), the vendor asked me to speak in order to assert my difference by insisting that I was wrong: I couldn't speak because I couldn't really understand him. His refusal to recognise my linguistic subjectivity was connected both to his own hurt pride, as a Neapolitan man without work, and, I also felt, to deeply-held feelings about sexual preserves the threat of miscegenation inherent in black men and white women socialising together at the bar. Our refusal to patronise his wares, even when he appealed to our sense of charity, was insulting to him because we appeared to be migrants and, according to established racial and sexual hierarchies, it was humiliating that we were more socially and economically entitled than him. Thus, his rude and intimidating behavior was designed to mitigate the shame he felt at his own marginalization. Underlying the question he posed to me was a power slapdown intended to warn us about our inappropriate behavior. The vendor asked us if we could speak Italian in order to show us what he really thought of us as we sat there.



*Figure 31: Ku's Stall, photo by author (May 2012)*

Whilst in the field, I also spent time doing participant observation on the stall of Ku, a Chinese street vendor who sold electronic goods (see photo above). Unlike the other interactions between vendors and customers that I witnessed, many people who approached this stall, and the others flanking it, were totally convinced that the vendors couldn't understand the Italian the Chinese vendors were speaking, even when evidence to the contrary was presented to them:

Many people patronised Ku's stall this morning; an Italian man looking for a phone charger, a South Asian man who bought a padlock. I noticed that most of the customers communicated with gestures, holding out their phone and pointing at the charger socket or repeating the name of the item, they were looking for over and over again, like: 'padlock. Padlock.' Ku has been in Italy for six years and I knew that his Italian was very good, as we had been chatting about family and the trials of street vending since I had arrived. But they didn't seem to think he could understand or respond to complex phrases. One African man approached the stall, looking for a USB stick. He picked up a multi-pack and put his fingers round one of the sticks, indicating he wanted only one from the pack: 'how much?' 'Three euros,' said Ku. The man made a shocked face and held the pack up again, 'how many here? One, two, three, six (counting on fingers)! How much all?' Ku responded resignedly that the whole pack cost 'seven euros'. 'So one euro!' Ku accepted to sell the USB for one euro and the man moved off.

The following week a middle aged Neapolitan man approached Ku's uncle's stall, holding out his mobile phone. He pointed to the charger socket and said:

**Man: Eh! Eh! (Pointing).**

**Ku's Uncle:** A phone charger?

**Man:** Eh! Eh! (Noises to indicate agreement).

**Ku's Uncle shows him the charger.**

**Man:** How much?

**Ku's Uncle:** Three euros.

**Man:** Eeeeeeei?! (He rubs his thumb and forefingers together to indicate that the price is too high).

**Ku's uncle shrugs and the man moves on.**

In the above episode, in particular, the Neapolitan customer was so convinced that Ku's uncle couldn't understand him that he failed to compute that the vendor's calm and sensible responses were spoken in perfect Italian. In fact, he turned himself into a parody of what he believed Ku's uncle to be: an incomprehensible and insensate foreigner who could only be communicated with in a limited way through the use of grunts and gestures. He believed that the alterity of Ku's uncle was too great to be overcome.

Racialised language attitudes about the speech of Chinese migrants were similar to those held about Bangladeshi migrants, discussed in the first part of this chapter, in that it was generally believed that they didn't speak or understand Italian and so couldn't interact with locals on equal grounds. To a certain extent these attitudes were likewise alimented by racist stereotypes of Chinese masculinity as weak and effeminate, unable to defend themselves not only because they were physically slight but also because they did not possess sufficient linguistic prowess. So episodes of linguistic domination, such as the above, were important ways in which Chinese migrant vendors experienced racism.

At the same time there was an undercurrent of jealous resentment and intimidation in people's behaviour towards Chinese migrants because of perceptions about their cultural insularity and fears of their collective economic might. Many of my research participants told me that cheap Chinese imports had destroyed the market for Made in Italy products in Naples. They had totally changed what they sold and how they sold it, and they claimed that Chinese stockists frequently undercut them when selling the same products. I also often heard grumbles that the Chinese worked so hard that anyone else was unable to keep pace. The changes wrought by Chinese commerce and migration have fuelled much tension and paranoia in Naples, as they hit Neapolitans at the heart of the economic survival practices that have helped them to survive over the years. Thus, the Neapolitan singer Pino D'Amato captured a number of imaginations when he dedicated an entire album, entitled *What have the Chinese done?* (2007), to the issue of Chinese economic activities in Naples.

It is certainly true that Chinese imports have taken a large chunk of the retail market in Naples. This is because the logic of late Capitalist mass consumption requires cheap products for people to buy, especially during an economic downturn. Also, it should be recognised that much Italian manufacturing has moved out of the city to warehouses in regions like Puglia where rent is cheaper and there is more space for large vehicles to move around. Some areas of the city, and surrounding suburbs, have now become enclaves of Chinese-owned warehouses and shops, where Chinese imports are sold directly to the customer. This customer might be buying for their own individual use or, more likely, intending to sell on these products in their shop or on their market stall, somewhere else in the city. I heard much speculation that Chinese economic success was fed by the involvement of the Chinese mafia. This common assertion joined other, more fantastical, rumours that circulated about the Chinese in Naples. For example, I

was told about the story that there has never been a Chinese funeral in the city. When someone dies people say that their body is sent back in a container to China and their documents are recycled for another person who enters using the dead person's visa. This wider context informed the particular nature of racialised encounters between Chinese street vendors and their customers that I saw in the field. Their supposedly not speaking or understanding Italian was constructed as an existential condition that underpinned the other ways in which they inserted themselves into and dominated everyday economic practices in Naples.

## Concluding Thoughts

In this chapter I have explored various manifestations of not talking that signalled where the fraught and ambiguous transcultural talking taking place every day in Neapolitan street markets broke down and become impossible. I started by looking at racist insults and aggression that silenced the Other and so refused the convivial possibilities of everyday Relation. I then went on to argue that these were not the only forms of linguistic exclusion and domination that marked the boundaries between talking and not talking at all. Tensions around understanding and being understood were both key ways in which rejections of particular forms of difference were articulated and exclusionary conceptualisations of belonging were asserted. This involved the invocation of racialised language attitudes that have their origins in Enlightenment modernity and are today woven throughout the anti-immigration politics of fortress Europe. The brutality of these linguistic refusals were connected to this painful history, as they were an important way in which Neapolitans mitigated their own marginalisation and subordination by oppressing those more vulnerable than them. This involved an explicit rejection of the multilingual forms of communication that are so prevalent in Naples,

and which have always marked the city as part of a ‘porous’ Mediterranean (Chamber 2008); a pelagic fusion of hybridised histories and encounters. The politics of not talking at all acted in important ways to close down these convivial possibilities for the becoming of new meanings of belonging in Naples today.

## Chapter Eight: Contentious Language and Living with Disposability in Naples

*Accusì va ó munno, chi nata e chi va 'nfunno*

*That's how the world goes, some swim and some sink*

*Tre songo é potenti: 'o papa, 'o malamente e chi nun tene nulla*

*There are three powerful people: the pope, the criminal and he who has nothing to lose*

*(Neapolitan proverbs)*

‘Naples is dead’; ‘this is burnt earth’; ‘it’s no good here anymore’; ‘the only thing left for us to do here is die’. A preoccupation with talking about Naples as a dying or barren city was so common amongst the people I spoke to during my research that I eventually came to paraphrase such discussions as the ‘Naples is dead conversation’ in my field notes. Both the Neapolitan and migrant street vendors I worked with repeatedly shared this desolate notion with me, although not always in the same way. A Neapolitan person would be more likely to say, ‘Naples is dead’, whereas many of my migrant informants would complain about Naples being ‘no good anymore’. However, when I asked them what they meant a similar set of themes would emerge. Talk of dying was the way in which they referred to the concatenation of austerity measures, economic stagnation and municipal crackdown on street markets in Naples that were impacting upon their lives so harshly. Their words connected the difficult moment they were living through to the historic suffering, deprivation and grit of the Neapolitan poor – as expressed in numerous proverbs, such as the two reproduced above – and also, paradoxically, to a nostalgia and regret of better times, when it had been easier to make ends meet through creative and informal economic practices. They often articulated these feelings through a particular set of images of Neapolitan pavement life: they took photos of street

markets and protests; they pointed to the rubbish that piled up, uncollected, on the sides of streets, and worried about the attendant threat of disease; they spoke of reduced access to free water fountains. In short, the language through which they articulated unsurvivability, oppression and decline in Naples was connected to the logic of *l'arte di arrangiarsi* and the everyday acts of living in the face of tragedy that I have been discussing so far in this thesis. The logic of global capital had turned my research participants into 'human waste' unable to support themselves productively or be reintegrated into society (Bauman 2004; Mbembe 2003). In this chapter I examine the ways in which they spoke back to, and sought to renegotiate, the fact of their own disposability in moments of extreme threat.

Both migrants and Neapolitans were caught up in the downward spiral of market closures and job losses but they did not always end up facing the pressure to disappear in the same way. While all market vendors were placed under significant pressure during my research, it was black street vendors who were reproduced as the 'folk devils' onto whom political, economic and cultural anxieties could be projected. Aggressive challenges to their presence on the pavement were symbolic performances through which the threat they represented was repeatedly managed and exorcised (Hall et al. 1978, p.161; Wacquant 2008b, pp.46, 51). These tactics of divide and conquer set migrant and Neapolitan vendors against each other. But, at the same time, a shared understanding of their common oppression brought them together. When I asked my respondents whom they thought was responsible for the current state of affairs they told me it was the immigrants, or it was those people who sold illegal contraband. Others said it was the fault of state policies and City Hall corruption, and Neapolitan people who needed to start standing up for themselves. Local and state powers sought to contain, weaken and remove unwanted street vending and street markets, partly in

response to populist pressure, through an argument of their deviance and disorder (Mitchell 2003, pp.164-7). In response, spatially-informed, ‘contentious discourses’ (Steinburg 1999), on the part of people working in markets, acted to reinvent hegemonic discourses about market vending and appropriate the topography of the city at times when their livelihoods were threatened (De Certeau 1988, pp.12, 29-30, 97-8). Bakhtin wrote that multiple genres could work together dialogically to inform the consciousness of the people as part of a hybrid and creative ‘heteroglossia’ (Smith 2004, p.263; Maybin 2001, pp.66-7; Bakhtin 1981, pp.270-92). Under certain circumstances, the street vendors’ laments of death, disease and decay – a key way in which powerless individuals spoke back to power – transformed into political discourses that took inspiration from the language of antiracism, human rights and trade unionism. These two contentious speech genres appeared both together and separately in people’s talk to provide a ‘descriptive frame’ that allowed them to ‘think, act, and survive’ in the face of their own tragedy and waste (Ries 1997, p.51; Smith 2004, p.253).

A number of key events brought to the fore the suffering of street vendors whilst I was in the field in 2012. The first one I look at in this chapter is the attempted suicide of a licensed market trader who had not been paid in months. This was one of many suicides and attempted suicides that were happening across Italy at that time. The second issue I address is the crackdown on unlicensed market stalls that took place. Although the police have always sought to control and limit unlicensed vending, this period marked a shift in the intensity and ferocity of patrols and evictions. Finally I explore the particular events surrounding Via Bologna market, the small licensed African market that City Hall sought to close down as part of their stated battle to sever the links between the informal economy and organised crime. In the final part of this section I look at what happened when the migrant and Neapolitan street vendors around Piazza Garibaldi, both

licensed and unlicensed, organised with the city's activists in order to defend their livelihoods. The looming threat of the final death of street markets necessitated fraught explorations of transcultural cooperation and organisation, and a strategic or dialogic approach to making rights claims that relied on a careful balance of submission and rebellion (Scott 1990, p.92). Transcultural animosities and linguistic boundaries had to be overcome to try and fight for a Gramscian local-popular, capable of bringing about social change.

## Suicide as a Symbol of Disposability

During the time I was doing fieldwork, a suicide epidemic was spreading across the country (Vogt 2012). In Neapolitan street markets suicide was both something tragic that was really happening to people, and a metaphor through which ideas about death, threat to livelihood, disease, migration and governance could be discussed, explored and negotiated.

One day in late May I was walking to Via Bologna to do fieldwork when I came across the following scene unfolding in the parallel street, Via Torino.



Figure 32: Attempted Suicide at Via Torino CGIL, photos by Serigne (May 23rd 2012)

The assembled crowd were staring up at a man hanging half in and half out of a 7th floor window of the CGIL trade union. The police were already in attendance and had blown up a suicide balloon which was standing like a quivering, red bouncy castle on the pavement outside the building. A Neapolitan man commented to me that, 'people are desperate', his mouth turning down at the corners as he shook his head in disgust. I later found out that the man hanging out of the window was a Neapolitan market vendor who hadn't been paid in four months (Di Domenico 2012). I went over to greet a Senegalese friend from Via Bologna market. He was immersed in an argument with a group of West African men in French about what would happen if the man hanging out of the window was a migrant. One tall, very thin man angrily proclaimed, 'if he was an immigrant they would push him out the window! They would put him in prison!' His friend protested that, 'it's not true! This isn't the jungle here!' to which his interlocutor responded, 'the jungle is better than here.' Things started to get a bit heated so I moved over to greet an activist friend, who sarcastically asked me whether things could get any worse than this. Serigne arrived from Via Bologna, clasping the camera I had given him for my research project. He took a series of photos, two of which are shown above. Everyone around us was asking each other whether the man at the window was foreign or Italian. Eventually he consented to be pulled back inside the building. Everyone on the pavement, and those watching out of surrounding windows and balconies, clapped and cheered and eventually started to disperse.

The unofficial discussions taking place between the spectators in front of the CGIL spoke of the ways in which the realities of disposability were abstracted dialogically through interactive and reciprocal social interests and experiences in Naples (Bauman 2005; Mbembe 2003; Voloshinov 1986). The fact that such an act of desperation could come to stand for multiple and intersecting instances of suffering and struggle on the

part of both Neapolitan citizens and African migrants raised the possibility of some sort of ‘Relation identity’ (Glissant 1997; 1981) amongst the Piazza Garibaldi local-popular which was being articulated through an opaque, chaotic and shifting multilingual togetherness. Whilst the streets around Piazza Garibaldi were being reconfigured as a tourist paradise of sanitised leisure shopping, the subversive carnivalesque potential of the market informed the resistant strategies of the local people who were being pushed out. But, as with all instances of the carnivalesque, the attempts to re-code the relations of dominance failed to completely do away with inequalities of power (Stallybrass and White 1986, p.19) resulting in the painful reincorporation of racialised and gendered hierarchies.

The ideological content of the spectators’ dialogic reasoning manifested itself in their ‘contentious discourses’ (Steinburg 1999). The imagined possibility of being pushed out of the window to fall to your death, the wry and embittered manipulation of the idea of the jungle and civility, and the eloquent exhortations about this being a sign of generalised desperation, were all subtle ways in which subordinated groups of people sought to speak back to power. These were the sorts of political or contentious discourse practised by the powerless that Scott (1990) describes in his work: jokes and exhortations of despair that created a disguise of ‘*ideological* insubordination’ from where people could construct an anti-hegemonic ‘imaginative capacity’ which may or may not be acted on depending on the situation (pp.19, 90-92). The different contentious verbal strategies of the Piazza Garibaldi local-popular demonstrated the ways that race and racism met contextually-situated imaginaries of death, dying and human waste to inform the potential for collective subaltern ideologies, and possibly action, across racialised, transcultural boundaries. These dialogical processes were often

contingent and ambiguous in their ambitions. Utopian imaginings always contained the possibility for the creation of further hierarchies and subordination.

The day after the suicide attempt at the CGIL trade union, the city woke up to the following scene along the main arteries of the city centre:



*Figure 33: Political Activism, photos by author (25<sup>th</sup> May 2014)*

Overnight, an unknown group of political activists had stuffed white boiler suits with newspaper, stuck a balloon in the hood to mimic a face, and hung the resulting ‘bodies’ by the neck from trees and lampposts across the city. As can be seen, the ‘bodies’ had signs around their necks saying things like ‘worker’, ‘pensioner’, ‘woman’, and ‘immigrant’, thus representing the groups of people who were being metaphorically and literally disposed of as a result of austerity politics and cuts.

In these episodes, suicide came to symbolise the ways in which humans were being turned into waste and disposed of in Naples through lack of work, resources and laws which restricted the rights of migrants. Amongst the spectators at the CGIL trade union it became emblematic of the difficulties they were all facing, and something both deeply political as well as intensely personal. A few days later the contentious multilingual

mutterings that had taken place next to the suicide balloon were taken up by the group of activists hanging fake bodies from lampposts, who sought to make explicit the forms of suffering that people shared across transcultural boundaries in the current situation. A lament of death coalesced into a wider human rights discussion about the injustices faced by the poor. The language of the streets got taken up and organised by people seeking to make political change happen.

## Disposing of Unlicensed Street Vendors

### Black Street Vendors as Folk Devils

Many people complained to me about unlicensed street vendors whilst I was doing fieldwork. People I knew whose families owned shops condemned them for selling the same products as them, except at vastly reduced prices, and I saw them show open hostility towards the black men selling products off strips of cloth in front of their shops. Some street vendors did have a good relationship with the people running the shop behind their stall (like Ibra and Giovanni); but many more people working at the higher end of the retail market in Naples complained that unregulated street vendors had not earned the right to do commerce in the same way as them. This was because they did not rent spaces, build up relationships with stockists or pay taxes and, furthermore, they ruined the look of the street, affecting more legitimate and high-end businesses. I have also regularly heard people report feeling menaced and harassed by black street vendors. For example, I was once at a First Communion lunch full of Italian expats back at home in the UK. One man told me he had just come back from Pisa and was shocked by, what he referred to as, ‘those great big Nigerians’ who tried to bully him into buying merchandise as he attempted to approach the leaning tower. Others complained about the mess and dirt that street markets left behind, but in reference mainly to the Roma

markets as opposed to the Neapolitan-run markets at Porta Capuana and in the San Antonio neighbourhood, where part of the pavement around the bins had collapsed to form a large crevice that filled up with rotten food and bits of packaging throughout the day. Although it was not openly acknowledged, the street markets that were most contested were those that were unlicensed and run by non-white migrants, black Africans above all others.

Racialised attitudes about black masculinity as physically threatening and sexually dangerous played an important part in the formation of African street vendors into ‘folk devils’ who could be popularly held up as the biggest challenge to honest Neapolitans struggling to get by in the city. Their reaction was one of historically informed prejudice, but was also an ‘expression of pain and powerless’ in a situation of joblessness, as has been explored in more detail in Chapter Five (Hall et al. 1978, pp.160-161). Furthermore, black street vendors reminded Neapolitans of the uncomfortable commonalities between themselves and new migrants from the global south, with whom they shared the realities of being both disposable and racialised. At the same time, the African vendors embodied the threat of miscegenation and racialised impurity that needed to be policed and controlled, even more so because of the subaltern status already held by Neapolitans. On one occasion I came across a Neapolitan lady who had a jewellery stall along Via Bologna market. Her daughter often spent time on the stall with her after school. She was crying and explained to me that a local Neapolitan man had warned her to keep her daughter away from the Senegalese men in the market, as black Africans carried diseases. ‘*We have diseases: we have cholera!*’ she told me through her tears, acknowledging the history of interlocked images of death, disease, decay that connected migrants and Neapolitans in the city (see Snowden 1995).

I also noticed that these complicated and enmeshed feelings about black street vendors, precariousness, disposability and inferiority were often projected onto all black people in Naples. In the middle of the night of the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 2012 I was woken by a text message from a friend in the antiracist scene asking me to come to the Piazza Garibaldi train station bar the following morning for an emergency demonstration.



*Figure 34: Emergency Demonstration at Piazza Garibaldi, photo by author (4<sup>th</sup> June 2012)*

When I arrived I found a group of men and women standing and sitting around a mountain of, what seemed to be, their worldly possessions, piled up against the wall of the station. As the photo above partly shows, this included pots and pans, mattresses, suitcases, small bits of furniture and a large number of umbrellas. My friend told me they were members of six families of Nigerian origin who, having escaped civil war in Libya to request asylum in Italy, had been kicked out of their hotel by the Protezione Civile (Civil Guard) following a number of days of tension that had culminated in them

occupying a bus in the hotel car park<sup>27</sup>. Two of the women were heavily pregnant and one had a new baby; they had been given emergency accommodation whilst the men spent the night sleeping in the station. A crowd of Neapolitan men, mostly in early middle age, were standing around and watching. Staff from the bar in the station then complained that their belongings were blocking the exit and a group of police (Vigili Urbani) and train station security guards (Vigilanza Privata d'Investigazione) approached to try and move them on. One old man told the officers, 'hey they've set up market!', and another told them, 'you need to get them out. You just need to get rid of them.' Another complained that they already had enough gangsters (*guappi*) to deal with in Piazza Garibaldi without these people getting into the mix. As there were a number of activists there it was possible to intervene on behalf of the stranded Nigerians. We helped them move all their belongings away from the exit whilst negotiations were under way to stabilise their situation.

The joke about the Nigerians setting up market, as well as the requests for the police and station security to remove them by force, revealed the ways in which capital structured class via hierarchical ideas of race through the trope of the folk devil black street vendor in Naples (Hall et al. 1978). The allusion to gangsters, or *guappi*, positioned black street vendors as a micro-criminal threat to the livelihoods of Neapolitans trying to make an honest living. It also raised the spectre of the organised criminal networks that impinged upon the informal economy and stratified the forms of domination that ordinary people were forced to live with in the city. Black street vendors were simultaneously associated with urban decay, criminality, threat to

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<sup>27</sup> See the article, available online, by Leombruno and Romano (2012) for details of this episode. The authors frame it as symptomatic of the incompetent and malicious mismanagement of the Libyan refugee crisis in Campania from 2011 onwards.

livelihood and markets, and so held responsible for Naples' downfall. In this instance, differential power relations among the dominated created space for a strategic appropriation of hegemonic anti-immigrant discourses that argued for the protection of Neapolitan unemployed and underemployed on the basis of the exclusion and public punishment of black migrant workers (Scott 1990; Wacquant 2008b).

### The Symbolic Exorcism of the Threat

A lot of the time irregular street vendors don't work because constant police patrols make it impossible for them to set up their stalls or force them to grab their merchandise and run, only to return and repeat the same scene all over again. I noticed that many street vendors folded the corners of their cloths over to make it easier to gather everything up quickly, throw the stall like a knapsack over their shoulders, and escape down a side street. Whilst I was in Naples these controls picked up significantly in intensity and many days, when I went to look for my research contacts, I was unable to find them.



Figure 35: Ibra Unable to Work, photo by author (April 2012)

One day in early January I set off to do fieldwork and ended up walking round to all the different spots of my research participants without any luck at all. Eventually I found Ibra standing near his usual spot looking both resigned and agitated. His merchandise was packed away in his trolley as in the above photos, taken later on in the season. He told me there were plainclothes police going up and down the road on foot and on mopeds. He wasn't able to work and didn't want me to hang around. 'Naples is no good anymore', he told me. Politely he suggested I go and greet Giovanni and then hurried off. Although migrants did not reproduce the 'Naples is dying' lament in the same way as their fellow Neapolitans, I noticed a parallel in how they thought about the city through this repeated phrase about Naples being 'no good anymore'.

After this, I headed off to Via Roma to see if I could chat to a Senegalese vendor I had been recently introduced to but hadn't managed to bump into again. The Neapolitan street vendors were still in their spots on the street corners but there were hardly any migrant vendors out there as I made my way up the road. On the way back down there was a group of black men laying cloths down on the pavement and starting to unwrap their merchandise. I noticed, in the distance, men in uniforms on foot, in cars and on mopeds. However, the group of vendors didn't have time to react to this. A passing moped, with two men on board dressed in civilian clothing, suddenly slowed as it passed the line of men. They froze, scrutinising the men on the moped. I was right behind them and noticed their eyes bulge as veins pulsed on their foreheads and the hairs stood up vertically on their arms. The moped passenger leaned in towards the men and locked eyes with them, making a precise Neapolitan gesture with his right hand that

told the men in no uncertain terms to ‘get lost’<sup>28</sup>. Whilst aggressive in intent, it was clear that the police were not seeking any arrests that day. This gesture gave the vendors time to pick up their merchandise and run again.

Given the scale of unregulated street vending that was being practised as a survival strategy in Naples, it was obviously impossible for the police to arrest and seize the goods of every vendor they came across. However, their presence and threatening behaviour contributed to the penal spectacle of arrests in order to legitimise national and international anti-immigration politics and fuel local antipathy for migrants. This reflects a shift towards more punitive methods of urban control, given an increasing lack of welfare support and decreasing economic stability in the West in general, whereby migrants are made into the scapegoats of urban poverty and decay (Wacquant 2008b, pp.46, 51). The game of cat and mouse, which the police and vendors played, was a performance of dominance whereby the public transcript about immigration and legality was reproduced by both the dominant and the dominated (Scott 1990).

Unregulated street vendors with Italian nationality face the risk of steep fines and confiscation of goods, particularly if selling contraband items. The value of the goods on the stalls I did research on varied from two hundred to five hundred euros so the loss of stock through confiscation represented a significant economic risk for all unregulated vendors. But the consequences for unregulated migrant vendors are much more serious. Arrest usually involves spending a night in Poggioreale Prison, whereupon most are released with a verbal warning and a deportation order if they were also undocumented. Many do not initially realise, because they are not offered legal support, that their case

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<sup>28</sup> He made a steeple with his hand, raising the little finger up vertically. He twisted his hand from the wrist, up and down up and down, in quick succession.

then goes in front of a judge and they end up with a criminal record. Under articles 380 and 381 of the Bossi-Fini immigration law, work visa applications cannot be granted in the case of any sort of criminal conviction (Normativa 2014). Should the vendor subsequently find legal work, they will be turned down for a visa in future. This law, which is consistently implemented in Naples despite instructions by the appeals court (the Cassazione) to reinterpret certain aspects of it, criminalises principally black and brown men who are the most likely to seek a living through street vending. They almost always have no criminal record in their country of origin.

The result of these public exorcisms on the popular imaginary are clear to see. Given the levels of moral panic about unregulated street vending and migrants in Italy it makes sense that Gianluca Casseri targeted Senegalese street vendors when he went on his racist and murderous rampage in Florence on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2011 (Montanari 2011). Those migrant vendors who understand the rules, but are unable to find legal work and have financial obligations both in Italy and back home, are desperate to avoid arrest. Last summer a Senegalese street vendor in Sanremo, who was fleeing from the police because he had a small amount of contraband amongst his merchandise, ran into the river and drowned (Parodi 2013). In June of 2014 a violent police raid of an unregulated market close to Via Bologna in Naples resulted in the arrest of twenty Senegalese men and the subsequent savage beating of one of them when he tried to call for help from the police station, showing how vulnerable black men are to police abuse and brutality through their association with unregulated street vending (Napoli Città Sociale 2014). These episodes highlight the cohabitation between laments about death, migrants and precarious market work, and the hegemonic anti-immigrant political discourse, which results in actual death or risk to life for particular migrant individuals.

Death structures and secures sovereign power through scapegoating and disposing of black African street vendors (Mbembe 2003, p.27).

### A Note on the Camorra and the Policing of Street Vendors

Today's entrepreneurial mafia relies on the labour surplus that has been created by the onset of globalised immigration to Italy (Arlacchi 1986, p.83) and so it is clearly in its interests to efficiently manage the transculturally stratified labour force that keep commercial activities running smoothly in Naples (Schmoll 2003)<sup>29</sup>. This means two things for unregulated and regulated street vendors alike. Firstly they are said to be the victims of extortion, by having to pay a tax on their profits and to rent the space where they have their stall. Whilst this certainly happens to some street vendors, no one I did research with would confirm that they did pay any sort of tax or protection money, although I have heard that in some parts of the city vendors give as much as seventy per cent of their earnings to local clans. Gennaro told me the Camorra were not interested in extorting money from people who only made small amounts of profit – for example those, like him, who sold socks or other small items – but they did extort money from people selling contraband. I worked with people who sold contraband items, but they also told me they didn't pay any sort of protection money. They were a bit more comfortable telling me how they were connected to the lines of production and distribution within which the Camorra also operates (D'Alessandro 2009). Modou told

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<sup>29</sup> The murder of seven West African men in Castelvolturno (Naples) in 2008 and the shootings of West African migrants working in agriculture in Rosarno (Calabria) in 2010 are two key instances where the Italian mafias have intervened with violence in order to re-establish their authority within two different commercial activities that rely on a large migrant workforce: drug dealing and agriculture. I should note that the victims at Castelvolturno were completely uninvolved in drug dealing or any other criminal activity. Their deaths were symbols of a territorial war going on between the Casalesi clan of the Camorra and rival Nigerian groups, to which they served as proxies for the dissemination of terror.

me he had a supplier whom he ordered his stock from directly at the factory where they were made. He paid first, 1000 euros at a time, and then picked up the bags when they were ready. Business was conducted rigorously in Neapolitan and healthy negotiations relied on mutual respect and collaboration. For example, Modou explained that the factory his supplier works in had been the subject of a police raid around the time we were having this discussion and the entire order Modou had asked for had been confiscated. An agreement was made that for every ten new bags he bought, he would get five for free. But he wouldn't bring bags directly to Modou because of agreements with local clans about distribution.

Unlike the dramatic penal spectacle provided by the police, the Camorra figured as mere spectres in my research. In Chapter Four I discussed the ways that transcultural collaborations within the informal economy, within which both the state and the Camorra played a part, created horizontal forms of solidarity and supported economic good health in Naples. Due to people's understandable unwillingness to discuss Camorra matters openly, I would say that more work needs to be done to unpick the ways in which the mafias intervene within and create the particular conditions of transcultural intersubjective infrapolitics in Italy. But I suspect, from the stories and rumours that I heard in Naples, that people collaborate across transcultural boundaries to find small ways of strategically managing the threat of violence from the Camorra in the same way as they seek to negotiate their relationship with state hegemony. This cannot be understood outside of a way of thinking about racism that places questions of racial hierarchy at the centre of local, national and international power formations. As such, to say that the violent actions of organised criminal groups against migrants is not racism (something I regularly hear) is to underestimate and oversimplify what racism is and how it works in people's lives.

## Strategic and Collaborative Responses



*Figure 36: Scanning the Road, photo by author (April 2012)*

My street vendor informants relied on their ability to recognise a number of visual, verbal and non-verbal clues in order to see danger before it arrived and avoid getting caught. The above photo shows a group of Senegalese vendors, friends of Ibra, scanning the road to see if it was safe for them to set up their stalls. As well as flashing blue lights and uniforms, they were also looking for plainclothes police and dodgy-looking cars which might be parked or circulating. I never became very good at picking up on these tell-tell signs and always annoyed them by asking them to explain what they were looking and listening out for. They also had ways of relaying danger signals, such as the gesticulation – making a circle in the air with the index finger – that got passed down the line of vendors on a road like a ‘Mexican Wave’ when police were coming. The direction of the oscillation (clockwise or anti-clockwise) indicated whether the police

were coming towards them or finally heading away. Such spatial and communicative repertoires were a crucial part of the street vendor's survival toolkit.

These tactics of evasion took place in collaboration with Neapolitans who ran or worked in nearby shops and bars, guarded the entrances of buildings or just lived locally. These people helped their street vendor friends by watching out for police and occasionally looking after their merchandise. Barmen were in a particularly good position to warn of oncoming danger because they circulated the area delivering espressos and croissants as part of their job. Thus struggles over the use of the space of the pavement in Naples also involved collaborations between subordinated groups who were stratified by different power relations. Jokes about the police between Neapolitan and Senegalese men – like Salvatore telling Ibra 'watch out, police!' when there were no police present, or Salvatore threatening to call the police and Ibra responding wryly, 'why bother? Police already here!' – were also ambiguous ways in which fear was defused and the nature of the collaboration between the men was explored. The sharing of warnings and humour acted as a form of contentious infrapolitics (Scott 1990), whereby the hegemonic order was disrupted by small acts of everyday verbal resistance to power.

But the sense of sympathy and solidarity Neapolitans felt for the plight of migrant street vendors was often ambivalent at best; and tied up with notions of a wounded regional pride and a sense of working class, southern subordination. Salvatore told me he didn't get involved with the business of the migrant vendors he came into contact with, limiting himself to warning them when police were coming. His policy was to do nothing if they got caught; there was nothing he could do and he thought it was understandable that the police got violent if they resisted arrest. These were '*black men's problems*', he told me. His obsession, explored in Chapter Five, with the idea that

black men were physically tougher than Neapolitan men, justified his argument that they were better able to stand constant police harassment, though he was aware of their constant anxiety. Like other Neapolitan men I spoke with, Salvatore felt that migrant men posed a significant threat which, though defined in vague economic terms, spoke to racialised hierarchies of masculinity and interracial sexual preserves. He told me that the government should let them all look for proper work or not let them come at all. Otherwise in no time '*the immigrants will be more than us*' and the situation for ordinary Neapolitans would be out of control. He was more shaken by the regular news of suicides and attempted suicides that were circulating the city whilst I was doing fieldwork. On one occasion I arrived and he told me a doorman a few blocks down from him had hung himself upon hearing he had lost his job. He told me this should never be the solution and people should always try to go on. He insisted that there were always ways to find pleasure in life, even when the going was hard. For example, you could have spaghetti with clams after New Year when the clams were cheaper and you could always go to relax at the beach for a day. In this case talking about death and precariousness was a way of talking about surviving in the face of suffering. It was also part of an exclusionary vision of local cultural, economic and political configurations where different lives and livelihoods had different values and meaningfulness.

## The Battle for Via Bologna

From May 2011 to about May 2012 Via Bologna market was very nearly shut down by City Hall. Despite the fact that Via Bologna market fed and clothed at least eighty families, its continued existence did not suit the economic rationale of the Piazza Garibaldi regeneration project that was put into motion following Luigi De Magistris' election as Mayor in May 2011. This was not the first battle for survival that my street

vendor informants had fought. Rather, it was part of a long history of struggle over street market spaces, both in Naples and elsewhere. Early on in the fieldwork I was moved to discover that some of the older Senegalese vendors selling bags on Via Bologna had run stalls on the unregulated street market on 125<sup>th</sup> street in Harlem, New York, in the early 1990s. The story of this market, which was eventually forced to shut down by City Hall, was the subject of Paul Stoller's ethnographic work (1992). Thus, the struggles faced by the market traders at Via Bologna connected to other histories about worklessness, disposability and the logic of capital across time and space. During much of the period I was doing fieldwork, the market was open for everyday trade and the dynamics of this have been explored elsewhere in the thesis. Here I describe the struggle and provisional victory of the street vendors to keep the market open during the time I was with them from November 2011 to July 2012.

In the first part of this section I examine how vendors' laments about death, dying and decay, during my fieldwork, connected the contemporary situation to a long history of precariousness and disposability in Naples. In the second part I look at discourses that took inspiration from antiracist, human rights and trade unionist language, thus linking the local context to a broader set of trans-national, socio-economic and political struggles. I argue that the contentious use of both these genres generated forms of subaltern social bond that were both historic and pointed towards a potential future Relation that could bring people together as a local-popular. I also argue that there was an edge of exhilaration in the performance of these genres, as they connected individual anxieties to the wider context of tension and turmoil and made them feel part of something bigger (Ries 1997, p.49). In the final part of this section I present some of the key moments of the crisis, when licensed and unlicensed stallholders around Piazza Garibaldi were forced to organise politically across fraught transcultural boundaries in

order to ensure their own and their families' survival. At these moments, the infrapolitical (Scott 1999) or quasi-political (Hall et al. 1978) tactics that helped them to manage everyday instances of oppression had to be transformed into strategies of direct negotiation and petition with their oppressors. Like the hotel workers in the Minneapolis in 2008, this involved practical organising in a number of different languages as well as multiple acts of cross-cultural translation (Burger 2000). Contentious discourses – among the street vendors as well as directed against Police, the media and City Hall – that made use of both laments about death as well as a more traditional rights language – sought to invent a new rights talk and context for these social practices (Mitchell 2003, pp.24-7).

### Discourses about Death, Dying and Decay

Talk about Naples being dead or dying was a key speech genre through which people at Via Bologna market thought through, acted on and sought to survive the economic precarity and political turmoil around them during November 2011 to May 2012 (Ries 1997, p.51; Scott 1999; Smith 2004, p.253). The following speech, by Gennaro, shows how such talk enabled him to express disillusionment and frustration with the process he and the other vendors were going through, after they had been evicted from their historic places around Piazza Garibaldi and not offered suitable new spots. At this time Gennaro and a few of the other Neapolitan vendors, who had lost their spots, had set up stalls temporarily within Via Bologna market, where this conversation took place. The hopes that had been raised by a demonstration and meeting with town councillors a week or so before had now been dashed by the recent announcement that the Neapolitans couldn't return to their original spots and had not been assigned anywhere new. They had requested a new meeting with the mayor, which had been refused:

**Gennaro:** It all looks black to me... completely black.

**Me:** How do you mean?

**Gennaro:** It's just that... I dunno... that Neapolitans say 'Naples is dying!' But it can't die, you know? In the meetings I've had with various councillors I've told them, 'look I'm willing to roll my sleeves up, to work, for this city, even in the cold, so that we can rise out of this situation where 'Naples is decadent', 'Naples is dirty', 'no one cleans Naples', 'Naples can't fight back'. 'Let's do this!' I tell them. Even if it does my head in. Even if I have to roll my sleeves up. And then after all the talking (**the discussions about where to move their stalls to**) there's nothing, despite all we've tried to do. It has no value. So I'm not doing it (**moving the stall to the proposed new site**) because I would kill myself with work for... nothing. You see?

For Gennaro, Naples' sickness was the result of poor urban management and the possibilities of recovery lay in a two-way dialogue between the elite governing the city and those at the bottom willing to roll their sleeves up and make the necessary changes. On another occasion he told me: 'So, if we want to fix this city. If we want it to be reborn. We need to build our foundations right here, do you understand me?' For Gennaro, the survival of the city and his own reintegration within the economy were interconnected, although he recognised that City Hall did not measure urban renewal on the same terms. As such, he would have to choose the forms of survival offered to him by the local informal economy to safeguard his own life even if the life of the city could not be saved, or if he was to be excluded from its re-birth. Later on in the same conversation he spoke more about the painful and mortifying experience of negotiating with city councillors:

**Gennaro:** You know Narducci (**a councilour, now removed from his post**) went to Piazza Carità and saw all those stalls that had been nicely done up – because they weren’t ugly (**Omar:** Yes) He went up to one of the historic vendors there and said, ‘can I tell you something? These stalls make me sick.’ He’s got it in for the street vendors! He can’t stand them. You see? You go up to a vendor to humiliate him.

...

**Omar:** I got to head off to work now

**Gennaro:** When I asked him (**Narducci**), the first time we met in Town Hall, about whether the vendors might get their places back, do you know what he did?

**Omar:** hmmm...

**Gennaro:** (**puts his index fingers in his ears as Narducci did**) ‘what’s that? I can’t hear you!’

**Omar:** Yes, I was there. When you said, ‘us ten want to go back in front of the station’, he did that (**put his fingers in his ears and pretended not to hear**). He was standing up over all of us sitting down.

Gennaro’s discussion of death and dying was not just about material exploitation but also about the dignity and autonomy of those who were being cut out of any share they might have previously had in the local economy (Scott 1990, p.23). His anger was not just about the economic securities he was being forced to endure, but also about the ways in which the hegemonic discourse about street vendors sought to humiliate and vilify them, thus justifying oppressive action against them. He identified a common enemy in the politicians in local and national government, whom he argued were besting all of them and needed to be attacked together. These kinds of speech formed part of a ‘formulaic corpus’ (Hewitt 1998, p.8) about ideology and action through which he articulated common interests and ideas for collective struggle between the vendors at

Via Bologna market. As will be seen through examination of his other contentious discourses, there was a constant tension between an argument for a collective struggle on ethical and moral grounds, and a more pragmatic approach that reflected the decreasing amount of spots available and his need to establish himself in a new market space.

Gennaro and his cousin Alfonso tried multiple tactics to ensure that they retained their livelihood during the market upheaval. As well as joining the African vendors from Via Bologna they also collaborated with a group of Neapolitan vendors who had been evicted from spots from around the city. They were working with the CGIL trade union and the A3f activist group as part of a petition that was separate from the goings on of Via Bologna. One morning I joined Gennaro, Alfonso and the twelve other displaced Neapolitan street vendors at a small protest outside City Hall. They were surrounded by a Precari Bros. occupation. A representative of A3f, an antiracist group in Naples, and Enzo, a representative from the CGIL union, had gone inside to try to arrange a meeting with the mayor. They emerged, without achieving their objective and the depressed atmosphere darkened significantly. Together the group discussed possible strategies, including an assembly at the CGIL with the mayor. One aged street vendor who had sold CDs and reading materials around Piazza Garibaldi for over two decades, said that if an assembly happened he would tell the mayor, '*you're a wanker!*' Enzo responded that he shouldn't speak like that, or he would get thrown out. The old man got angry and shouted, '*I'll say things how they are: You're a wanker, you're a shithead!*' We all laughed. He continued, '*can't I just kill him? He's killed me, so why can't I kill him?*' With this, discussion disbanded and I made my way back to Via Bologna with Gennaro and Alfonso.

Here, again, the trope of life and death was used in order to conceptualise and articulate the struggle the vendors were facing. The stream of insults proposed by the old man was an important form of release for the suppressed rage and frustration that he and his colleagues were feeling. Like the speech play between African American men and women that Geneva Smitherman talks about in her work (2006; 2007), the man's cussing was not designed to be expressed outside of their circle but as a tool for organising their rage in a situation where it was necessary for them to be much more strategic and dialogical about how they petitioned City Hall for their jobs (Scott 1999).

Imaginaries of death, dying and decay continued to inform the talk of vendors at Via Bologna after it had been officially re-opened for business in April/May 2012. This was reflective of the ongoing difficulties vendors were facing in a depressed economy and following months of ideological warfare against the markets they worked in. I went down to Via Bologna on the day it re-opened for business. All the vendors had been allotted numbered spaces along the road, and some were very unhappy about their new position. The spots were also quite small so people had to adapt their stalls and put less merchandise on show. Gennaro and Alfonso were complaining about the smell of African food being cooked and pointed out the culprits to me, saying they didn't know how they would stand it if they continued to stay in the same spot. A small number of the historic vendors had lost their spots because they hadn't paid all their taxes. This had created space for new vendors to come into the market, all Italian.

The restrictions imposed upon space within the market showed that Via Bologna victory was only partial in nature. Although there would have been many hundreds of migrant vendors eligible to win a place within the market, it was also interesting that the only new vendors were Italian citizens. Via Bologna market was originally designated as an

African market, although it is true that this served to ghettoise the presence of African street vendors, limiting their presence in other regulated markets across the city (D'Alessandro 2005, p.154-155). It was clear that a further stage of marginalisation was in process now. The struggles over limited spaces within Via Bologna stratified people into different hierarchies of oppression and subordination. For Gennaro and Alfonso this became encapsulated through the smell of food which they connected to other imaginaries of Naples and Neapolitan markets being in the process of dying. Although they had been active members of the struggle for Via Bologna, and had argued vociferously for collaboration across transcultural boundaries at the time, the lived reality of working alongside African vendors – when they were only allowed tiny stalls and in a market that was empty of customers – was not as appealing to them.

The market continued to fail to thrive as I came to the end of my fieldwork. The ambivalent and delicate nature of transcultural relationships in the market following the end of the period of organised struggle was also stark. When I went to see the vendors there, we spoke of past struggles, old age and their belief that they didn't have any more fight left in them. These discourses, while seeming hopeless, acted as forms of 'ideological insubordination' (Scott 1990) whereby they continued to demonstrate their understanding of how they fitted into a longer history and wider context of subordination and struggle. As such there was an element of 'edginess' to their discourses, where it was possible to see sparks of grim exhilaration and a willingness to keep on going:

The market was very quiet when I arrived and greeted Gennaro and Alfonso. They told me it had been like this since the re-opening. They had moved their stalls to the head of the road, on the corner of Via Bologna and Via Firenze, in the hope of taking

greater advantage of the footfall along Via Firenze. They told me the Senegalese vendors who had won those spots were happy to move further into the market. The other Italians who had got a place on the market had stopped showing up and were setting up in busier parts of the city, albeit without official permission.

Gennaro started to tell me stories about the historic struggles to set up market stalls around Piazza Garibaldi. Comfort was an important ally in these battles but they fell out after Via Bologna market was transformed into a legal market in 2001. She ended up with a spot within the market –which was designated as an African market space – but he and Alfonso got spots around the square, where business was better. She had accused him of betrayal and they had only started speaking again recently, after ten years. For their part they had accused her of not collaborating properly with the arduous task of struggle, as she was more interested in opening her stall than taking time out to march and petition.

I went off to greet other people in the market and found Comfort who decided to go and say hello to Gennaro and Alfonso with me. They commiserated about the new market organisation and then Gennaro asked her how old she was. She said, ‘I’m fifty two. I’m old now and I can’t take this anymore’. They nodded in agreement. She said, ‘maybe it’s time to go home.’ Gennaro gently started to remind her about the old days, when she sold wax cloth and her son was tiny. She smiled in recollection and said that business was good in those days. Gennaro asked her, ‘but where did all your money go Comfort? Did you send it all home?’ Comfort mentioned that she had opened an internet point which had gone bankrupt because of too much competition. She said that she had lost all her money on this venture. She then told us she needed to get back to work and said goodbye. Gennaro and Alfonso

both agreed that it wasn't possible she had lost all her money. Gennaro said that Comfort was more clever than that: 'you don't survive all these years on a street market, especially when you're a woman, if you're not a bit clever and careful about what you say.'

I went to use the toilet in Riccardo's shop and, on the way out, asked him how things were going: 'They're going badly! No one is coming anywhere near this street!' He said that the recent troubles had put people off and the dilapidated state of the market and police presence was not helping. He suggested that the council had decided it was easier to starve out the market vendors instead of killing them off directly.

Riccardo's suggestion that the council were trying alternative ways of getting rid of the unwanted street markets in the city centre certainly made a lot of sense. It was an important way in which he showed he had not been taken in by the pacifying discourses of City Hall about the market now it was open again. The notion of death and dying was a way in which he spoke back against the fact of his disposability. The recollections between Gennaro and Comfort revealed a long history of struggle in Naples that had been organised alongside and within the fault lines of race, class and gender. The accusations that black vendors in the market were selling contraband and sanctioning other forms of more serious criminality had been one of the stated reasons for shutting down the market in the first place. Thus, the concentration of police patrolling Via Bologna market continued to signify the threat posed by the black street vendor folk devil. This figure of black criminality created a hierarchy of deservingness which made struggle across transcultural boundaries very hard to achieve.

## Rights Discourses

Alongside and interspersed within the discourses of death, dying and decay discussed above, a more universal sort of rights discourse also raged as people struggled to keep their market stalls open. This seemed to take inspiration from the language of human rights, trade unionism and antiracist politics. It was testament to the historically strong ties between the vendors and the different groups of activists in the city, from the CGIL trade union to the Precari Bros. unemployed movement, the small migrant rights charities like Garibaldi 101 and migrant associations like the Naples Senegalese Association. They worked closely together throughout the period in which Via Bologna was threatened with closure and the kinds of contentious discourses that emerged from this collaboration are revelatory of ways in which a local popular can emerge through transcultural and intersubjective interaction and successfully speak back to power, be it in thought or in action.



*Figure 37: First March for Via Bologna, photo by author (31<sup>st</sup> January 2012)*

Towards the end of January 2012, a march organised with the Senegalese Association and the street vendors around Piazza Garibaldi culminated in a meeting with a group of

City Councillors which was attended by Omar, on behalf of the African vendors on Via Bologna market, and Gennaro, on behalf of the displaced Neapolitan vendors from around Piazza Garibaldi. I was not allowed to join them for the negotiations but was told after that they received reassurances that Via Bologna was not under threat of closure and the Italians who had been evicted would be given the priority when applying for new spots on official street market spots that were shortly to be assigned. I went to greet them at Riccardo's shop on Via Bologna the day after the march. Serigne and Gennaro were there, chatting amicably. Gennaro told Serigne that they had done the right thing by joining forces and marching on City Hall en masse. 'It is right', he said jubilantly, 'that the rights of all the historic street vendors around Piazza Garibaldi had been recognised'. He then continued, 'it's also right that City Hall gives new people a chance to get by', referring to the new market spots that had been mentioned in the meeting.

Gennaro, knowledgeable about the mores of both political discourse and action, took the lead in this conversation about the recent march and meeting. He defined two important social actors in the street vending landscape: historic street vendors and aspiring street vendors, drawn together by the need to 'get by'. The verb he actually used was 'campare', which means: to survive, subsist, or get by as well as possible. He was thus connecting the political actions of the dispossessed vendors to the dignified and quasi-political logic of *l'arte di arrangiarsi*. Although this discussion was happening behind closed doors as a 'hidden transcript', it echoed the kinds of rights language about disposability that he would have used when talking with councillors in City Hall in the previous days, showing the ways in which the 'onstage' political performances of people in subordinated situations is honed and refined through 'offstage' ideology formation (Scott 1990, p.8). Although in this discussion he was referring to both

African *and* Neapolitan vendors when he talked about ‘all the historic street vendors’, I often noticed a slippage between this transcultural idea of the collective and a more exclusionary sense that the ‘historic vendors’ were the Neapolitan fourteen or just himself and Alfonso. The cousins were exploring multiple collaborative avenues whilst I was with them and attached themselves to the CGIL, the A3f (Associazione 3 febbraio) antiracist group and to Omar, who mobilised on behalf of the Via Bologna vendors across a number of different fronts. Of the historic fourteen (six of whom had been evicted from stalls around Piazza Garibaldi), they were the only ones who sought out transcultural forms of collaboration and resistance. There was a tension between utopian and instrumental aspirations in their actions, which was undoubtedly a pragmatic choice they decided to make, and which was both a hinder and a help to them. This can be seen from the following episode, which took place a week later. By this time it had become clear that the promises which had been made to the vendors by City Hall, were not going to be kept:

**Omar: (to Gennaro and Alfonso)** What’s up? All well?

**Gennaro:** No! Has Jamal (**CGIL migrants rep**) called you this morning?

**(He is referring to the refusal of City Hall to have a further meeting with the Italian vendors. Omar laughs and Gennaro joins him.)**

**Gennaro: (taking a menacing tone)** *Look dude. Those twelve who aren’t here (the twelve other Neapolitan vendors who have lost their spot around Piazza Garibaldi) They’ll come in here and make beef, trust me!*

**Alfonso: (approaching)** *Hey Omar. What’s up? Has Gennaro told you what’s going on?*

**Gennaro:** I’ve just caught him.

**Alfonso:** hmm.

**Omar:** Jamal has told me already anyway.

**Alfonso:** Ok, so you know everything then? Jamal got in touch this morning to ask for the documents (**to apply for spots within Via Bologna**).

**Omar:** Ok we'll see now...

**Gennaro:** Omar! You seem like one of those councillors up there in Town Hall!

**(Gennaro laughs)**

**Alfonso:** No, he's been saying this all day.

**Gennaro:** I don't see you that convinced when you say something, you know? One time you say 'we'll see', just to say 'whatever', really. Another time –

**Omar:** (**shouting**) It's not like that! Ok these are things that... one person... you need to –

**Gennaro:** You said you would organise a meeting with the mayor. You said we'd occupy the square and *make a bit of trouble*!

**Omar:** You have no idea how much crap I get when I try to work with City Hall. Look. The march I organised last week (**see photo above**) I did all on my own. No one else calls. No one else says anything.

**Alfonso:** No, no no! Like Gennaro says, we have to meet with the mayor before doing any more demos!

**Gennaro:** right!

**Alfonso:** Then maybe we'll get something done!

**Omar:** Look, I've just been with Jamal. We were talking about meeting with the mayor to talk about –

**Gennaro:** a meeting.

**Omar:** A meeting.

**Alfonso:** Yes, yes! But Jamal told us that he'd let us know during the day. Is that right?

**Omar:** So Jamal told me to come on up –

**Alfonso:** Yes, and he said everything's ok

**Omar:** yes, because the decree has been issued (**about the fate of market stalls in Naples**)

**Gennaro:** So have you understood? We need to meet with him (**the mayor**) and sort all of this out once and for all. The Italians want to know that their jobs are secure.

**Omar:** have you read the decree?

**Alfonso:** Of course! I've read it. I've read it all... But the wording is murky.

**Gennaro:** All it really says is that the market situation will be sorted by 31<sup>st</sup> March.

**Omar:** So that's it really.

**Alfonso:** And then they duck and dive...

**Omar:** Yeah well they say this but it's all bollocks. Another six months I'm telling you!

...

**Omar:** Anyway, let's see about this meeting –

**Alfonso:** You see. And if Jamal doesn't come down to speak with us, we're going up.

**Omar:** He's just gone up there (**to the CGIL offices**).

**Alfonso:** To make calls about this meeting?

**Omar:** We have to organise another march now.

**Alfonso:** To fight for Via Bologna?

**Omar:** No this is for the guys in the hotels who haven't got their visas yet (**the refugees**). Look, all of this, it's the councillors playing their political games.

**Alfonso:** We understand politicians for what they are. At least they could say that we can return to how things were (**their original spots**). The Italians in their own places, you know? That's was how we left things last Tuesday.

**Omar:** Look, I –

**Gennaro:** Omar, just tell it to me in Italian because you speak Italian well. I still understand a bit of Italian... What got said last Tuesday? They said that Via Bologna market will stay as it is and there will be the opportunity to re-apply for the spots, but giving priority to those who have been there for all these years. Then, if there are other spots available within Via Bologna, we get priority for those spots (**Neapolitan vendors from around Via Bologna**). Then, for those vendors who got kicked off spots in Via Roma and Montesanto –

**Omar: (exasperated)** I, I –

**Gennaro:** Then there's the fact that you all spent money to do up the market (**the plan to rebrand Via Bologna as an interethnic craft market called Napoliamo Road**) and then nothing ever came of it!

**Omar:** With 90 spots!

**Gennaro:** And we were told that would get sorted too!

**Omar:** Look, immigrants... the vendor licence of these vendors here got regularised ten years ago. People buy their vendor licences but are discriminated against still. In this country!

**Gennaro:** Discrimination? But that's even between us, you get me? (**rich and poor Italians**)

**Omar:** Every day, every day! We organise meetings! I live this life as an activist, no? Meetings, conferences, they tell us all these things all day long. It's not just marches you know.

At this point it was clear that relations with Omar were becoming strained. It's quite confusing and difficult to follow the men's discussion and this reflects the confusion, strain and desperation that they themselves were feeling. Omar's laughter at Gennaro's enquiring about Jamal and the meeting they wanted to organise with City Hall was a deflecting technique which Gennaro did not let pass. He joined in with the laughter but then swiftly warned him, in dialect, that the Neapolitan vendors could quite easily come down to the market and cause trouble if they needed to. As often happened on Neapolitan pavements, laughter and jokes were verbal strategies that signalled openly-identifiable threats. Dialect was often used in this way to make a point about differential status and positionality between Neapolitans and migrants and as part of the performance of a gangster or *guappo* masculinity with its attendant capacities for violence. Gennaro and Alfonso both accused Omar of having been seduced and distorted by the discourses of the powerful councillors in City Hall. For them this meant that the way he was responding to their requests was deliberately shady and unclear, just like the decree that City Hall had just published about street vending in the city. The public transcript of the powerful is always communicated in Italian – the symbol of political, economic and cultural domination that accompanied Italian unification. For this reason Gennaro mockingly asked Omar to speak to him in Italian, seeing as he had clearly learnt to speak it so well and he was also no fool when dealing with oppression from above. Omar was offended and struggled to explain the difficult position he often found himself as a cultural mediator and activist of colour. He pointed out that the special attention Via Bologna market was receiving from City Hall was the result of forms of discrimination against street vendors that were also racialised. It was important for him to fight racism. But Gennaro refused to accept this, insisting that he

and his Neapolitan colleagues had also always been discriminated against, but on the basis of class.

Relations between Omar, Gennaro and Alfonso continued to sour. A week or so later I was again standing with Gennaro and Alfonso by their stalls when Omar passed by. The two men called for Omar to stop a minute and Gennaro asked him why they hadn't been invited to the last meeting with City Hall. Omar seemed irritated by their questioning and tiredly explained that this was an Antiracist Forum meeting to do with the refugee situation in the hotels. Gennaro angrily interrogated, 'refugees and ... ?' Omar, looking at him strangely, and responded, 'just for the refugees.' Gennaro snapped back that, 'you see I thought you were about to say something else: 'refugees and r-a-cism.' Omar repeated again that the recent meeting had been organised by the Antiracist Forum and was nothing to do with the markets. Gennaro shouted at him, 'there's just one race: the political race!' Omar nodded understandingly, and slightly condescendingly, and told us he had to go. Gennaro and Alfonso asked him when he would be back to talk and Omar responded, 'after six thirty'. 'After six months?!' shouted Alfonso in disbelief. I explained that he had misheard. 'No, six months sounds about right', responded Alfonso sarcastically.

This scene was revelatory of the growing paranoia affecting the relationship between Gennaro and Alfonso and Omar, who the African street vendors within Via Bologna were all deferring to on the matter. Omar was involved with numerous struggles at this time, including Via Bologna and the refugee crisis. Again Gennaro made a plea for a common struggle using a language of class struggle that refused to recognise the stratifying effects of racism. I know from discussions with both Omar and Serigne at the time, that they were growing frustrated with and distrustful of Gennaro and Alfonso

because of their constant manoeuvres between different campaigning groups, some of whom they did not wish to affiliate themselves with. For their part, Gennaro and Alfonso felt that the African vendors were closing ranks against them. The differential power dynamics between the Neapolitan and African street vendors generated different sorts of contentious discourse, both when these discourses were hidden and public, and this made the question of collective resistance fraught and ambiguous (Scott 1990, p.26). I also found myself in the middle of this, with demands from Gennaro and Alfonso about the whereabouts of Omar and Serigne and what they were planning. I was both a fellow Italian and an outsider to them, and they knew of my connections to the people helping them in the antiracist scene. Serigne asked me to not report anything to them but to try and let things just play out. I tried to manage the awkward position I found myself occupying in this dispute by not commenting on what they said to me, although this occasionally generated more discord. Following another row between Gennaro and Omar outside Riccardo's shop, which I have not had space to describe in detail here, Riccardo asked me why I said nothing. I told him I was just listening and he laughed at me scornfully. I said to him that it would be nice if there could be greater solidarity between all of us and he told me, with a wide smile, 'It's culture, it's society'. What he meant was that discord was a natural part of human society, particularly when questions of racial difference and differential privilege came to the fore.

### Facing Power Together

Tensions continued to rise in the relationship between the Via Bologna vendors and activists and the councillors in City Hall. Eventually the daily goings on at the market started to be disrupted by a series of key interventions by the council, which eventually led to the market's closure and forced the vendors to work together despite their

differences. At this point, the forms of infrapolitical discourse and ideological insubordination discussed above had to be abandoned in favour of public verbal protest and condemnation. Because these events correspond to press reports that are still available online, and describe things that have had a dramatic effect on the lives of the people involved, I have chosen here to provide a translation of my field notes, made later on that day, beneath the exact dates on which they happened. I have not made a point of providing dates in the rest of the thesis but do so here as part of my contribution to providing a first-hand testimony of what happened on the ground.

7th March 2012

This was a particularly dead day at Via Bologna. Nobody was buying; nothing was happening. Suddenly, at about 2pm, two men arrived at the head of the market, one holding a large video camera and the other a portable microphone. They started speaking with two officers of the Vigilanza Urbana, which represents the branch of the police forces responsible for urban management. A shiver of fear snaked up the whole road, and people started whispering frantically to each other, thinking that these men might be linked to the Finanza, the branch of law enforcement that deals with matters of fraud. Alfonso, having casually walked over to eavesdrop on the two intruders, immediately enlisted the help of a local Neapolitan to pick up his stall and run as fast as possible away from the unfolding action. Everyone else started shoving any contraband items they might have had into large bags, closing their stalls up or covering everything up with a cloth.



Figure 38: Events of 7<sup>th</sup> March 2012, photos by author

The reporter and his cameramen started to approach the street vendors at the head of the market. On reaching Assane, one of the Guinean street vendors, the reporter

shoved the microphone towards him and shouted, ‘have you got a vendor permit? Show me your visa documents!’ Assane stuttered incoherently, holding the palms of his hands up to the man who immediately turned to face the camera and said, ‘as you can see no one here has a permit. This is an illegal market.’ He then approached a Senegalese street vendor, asking the same question. Comfort walked up to interrupt him and told him, ‘people here are just trying to survive.’ The reporter simply snapped back, ‘Where is your permit? Where are your visa papers?’ Omar arrived and Alfonso, having returned from hiding his stall, asked him what on earth was happening. Meanwhile, the reporter was interviewing an Italian vendor who had managed to obtain a vendor permit on Via Bologna separately to everyone else who were being made to wait until the official market reorganisation. I approached Assane and asked him if he was ok. I told him, ‘next time you say ‘no comment’. It means you refuse to speak.’ A tall stringy Neapolitan man standing next to me added that, ‘no comment is universal language nowadays.’ As far as I know he was unconnected to the business of the market, but there as an interested observer. Meanwhile all around us could be heard the frantic whisper that, ‘Finanza<sup>30</sup> are coming, Finanza are coming!’ Before I was even aware of it, the Chinese-owned shops along the back of the market had closed their doors and drawn the metal security gates down. Suddenly five police cars, with ‘Finanza’ emblazoned down the side, screeched down the middle of the market, having presumably removed the pedestrian barrier at the back entrance. They stopped at the midway point of Via Bologna and we saw two black men get bundled into the back seat of one of the cars before the line of cars, blue lights flashing, sped off again. This was all filmed by the

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<sup>30</sup> The Finanza are the branch of the Italian police who deal with questions of fraud.

dynamic reporter and his cameramen as we watched in horror. I took a photo of this moment, although I was nervous and it didn't come out well:



*Figure 39: The Finanza arresting Two Black Vendors, photo by author (7<sup>th</sup> March 2012)*

At this point I decided to approach the journalist and his cameraman, who were again standing at the head of the market, and introduce myself. I told them I was wondering what they were doing there. The reporter responded that they were putting together a report for 'Striscia la Notizia', a popular news programme broadcast by Canale Cinque, about illegal markets and contraband in Naples. I then explained that I was doing a research project about the market. The reporter asked me, 'are you a journalist?' 'A student', I told him. He then asked me, 'are you Neapolitan?' Failing to see the relevance of this, I evasively responded, 'half half'. He stared at me suspiciously for a few seconds and then, feeling intimidated, I thanked him and left. Shortly afterwards they sloped off. In the palpable relief that followed I went to see if Omar, Serigne, Sohna and Riccardo were ok. Serigne told me that the two men were found in possession of less than a handful of contraband CDs, but would face big

fines. We agreed that the whole thing had been set up. Riccardo told Omar that he should stop doing protests against racism because ‘there is no racism’. ‘We should protest about these kinds of corruption’, he asserted. Riccardo, who has a bit of a literary bent, turned to me and said, ‘this is the time of the spider, Antonia, and we are the mosquitoes in the net’.

This episode was revelatory of the lengths that at least certain councillors within City Hall were prepared to go to in order to win their ideological battle against the existence of Via Bologna. Moreover, it also demonstrated the ways in which black migrant street vendors and the sale of contraband had been produced as a key social problem in Italy. The journalist, one Pino Grazioli, told me (and the camera) that his team were investigating *illegal* markets and the sale of contraband, even though Via Bologna was certainly *not* illegal or unauthorised, whether or not *some* of the vendors may have been flogging a bit of contraband on the side or omitted to pay the entirety of the taxes they owed. As such it would appear he was willing to be libellous in order to further the aim of doing his job and justifying the suppression of their livelihoods. Given that there were unregulated and undocumented vendors exclusively selling fakes in plain sight along almost every pavement of the city centre, one does start to wonder why Via Bologna was targeted so aggressively. Given, also, that the majority of vendors were able to re-open their stalls following the market’s reorganisation, the suggestion is that the vendors at Via Bologna have been largely scrupulous in their business practice.

Clearly, City Hall, the police, and local media worked together in this campaign to create and amplify the moral panic about the Via Bologna African market as a threat to legality and public order. As Hall et al. (1978) have argued, the different institutions who give meaning to social events both assume and help to create a consensus about

them. They reproduce the definitions of the powerful as it is institutions who generally become the ‘primary definers’ of an event and so fix the ‘initial interpretative framework’ which is then very hard to break (Hall et al. 1978, pp.53-8). The final edit of the segment about Via Bologna is available for all to see on Striscia Napoli’s Youtube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGDFkxC68h4> (Striscia Napoli 2012). For those who are interested I am the blonde woman in sunglasses who appears at about 0.44 seconds. There are a number of fascinating things to say about the editing of the video – the decision to blur the features of the two African vendors interviewed, but not the Neapolitan vendor, in order to suggest their illegal status; the way in which the imperfect Italian of one of the African interviewees was mocked by the superimposition of audience laughter after they had spoken. However there is insufficient space here to do this properly and this would need to form part of a wider and more detailed analysis about the Italian media’s depiction of social issues to do with race and migration.

Here I will limit myself to commenting on the ways in which the hegemonic discourse about black vendors was both produced and disrupted in this episode, using both my field notes and the video. The vendors responded with a number of infrapolitical contentious strategies to try and speak back to the hegemonic framework being imposed on them. Assane chose to pretend he couldn’t understand, whilst Comfort made an exhortation about the vendors’ desperation and need to survive. I myself tried to hold the journalist to account by asking him what he was doing there. In all cases our protests were ignored or brushed aside because of our ethnicity and probably, in the case of Comfort and I, our gender. Humiliation was clearly as important as terror in the performance of dominance that took place. The parts of the video where the two African vendors responded to Pino’s ‘dogged’ questioning showed clearly how speaking and

acting ‘stupid’ could act as an imperfect form of self-protection for subordinated people. This ‘linguistic veiling’ is a key protective strategy that has historically been used by the powerless but, whilst it protected the two vendors from further scrutiny, it also left them vulnerable to racialised mockery as highlighted in the video (Scott 1990, p.32-26). The discussions that took place as soon as the police and journalists had left also revealed the keen understanding that everybody had of the corrupt political practices that were nourishing the oppression they were experiencing. My advice, echoed by the onlooker, that Assane use the term ‘no comment’ in future, pointed to the ways in which contentious language strategies could be used both protectively and with greater authority. Again, the different groups of people making a living along Via Bologna were internally stratified. Different forms of rights discourse were aired, to do with whether this was about racism or a battle of the haves against the have-nots. Of course, the refusal to discuss the racialised dynamics of this struggle was part of the epistemic violence through which racism worked through people’s lives there. But these dialogical and strategic discourses about how to organise struggle, and who to petition about their situation, also revealed the rebellious imaginative capacity of people who have to be very careful about how they choose to face power.

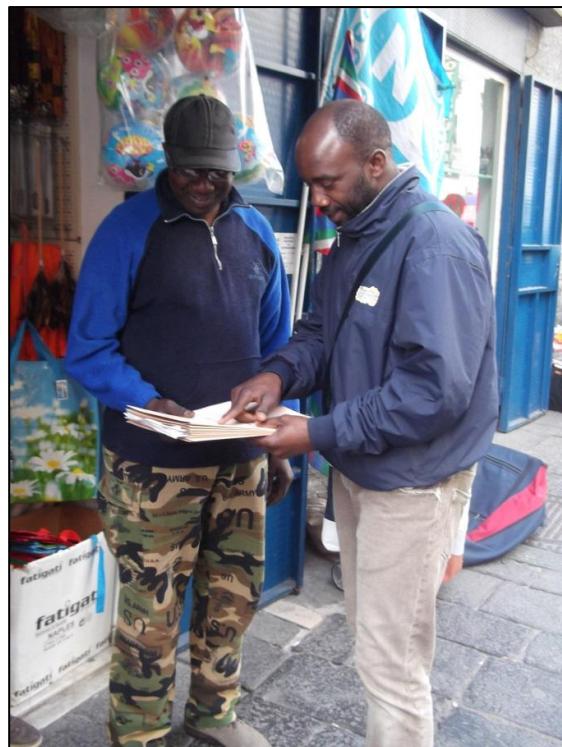
After this, a series of police raids of the market took place that eventually culminated in the market’s forced closure:

21st March 2012

When I got to Via Bologna this morning I found Serigne in a state of high agitation. He told me some police officers had shown up at the market at 8am that morning with an order to close the market down because it was ‘illegal’. Upon inspection, it appeared this order was from the year 2000, before the market had even been

regularised and when it was, indeed, illegal or unregulated. The officers were asked who had given these orders and what their identification numbers were, but refused to give any information and abruptly left.

Seeing as everyone was having to re-apply for their spots within the market, as part of its auditing and reorganisation, Serigne and Omar were working together to make sure that everyone's documentation was in order. As well as being in possession of a work visa, identity card, and vendor licence, they needed to prove that they had paid the relevant local and national taxes. As this had all been decided rather abruptly, and it was a time of year that many vendors were visiting family back home, this was creating significant bureaucratic difficulties for everyone involved. I talked to Omar about his recent disagreements with Gennaro and Alfonso. He told me that he felt they had no choice but to play the bureaucratic game for now.



*Figure 40: Serigne and Omar checking vendor's documents at Via Bologna, photo by author (21<sup>st</sup> March*

This unpleasant episode marked yet again the lengths that certain people in City Hall were prepared to go to in order to enforce their vision of a renewed Piazza Garibaldi. Whilst it would probably be unwise to name them, most of us had a pretty clear idea about who the people were who were abusing their power in this way. Another important consideration relates to the short notice that had been given for the applications process. This is an important way in which institutions make it difficult for people to complete tricky bureaucratic processes on time, even when they are eligible and have completed all the necessary requirements. This marked a point in the struggle for Via Bologna where the vendors were still trying to obey the bureaucratic processes in place, in the hope that this would be enough for them to stay open. Their prudence and submissiveness was an important everyday resistance strategy whereby they tried to work the system to ‘their minimum disadvantage’, though they were unable to change the state apparatus (Scott 1985, p.XV).

28th March 2012

I arrived to discover that the market had been shut down by police the previous day. They didn’t have an order this time but explained that Via Bologna had to be closed until the market was reorganised because there had been complaints about contraband being sold there. Omar and Enzo (a rep from the CGIL) had arrived on the scene as it was happening and demanded to see official documentation that the market had to be shut down. The police officer they approached responded by asking to see Omar’s visa. Enzo protested that this was unethical and the officer promptly threw him to the ground and dragged him along the pavement. Then both Omar and Enzo were arrested, only to be released without charge a few hours later. The atmosphere when I arrived was tense, with a significant police presence and the vendors sitting around helplessly. Omar then arrived with Serigne, having come from

City Hall where they had tried and failed to get a meeting with the mayor or any other councillor. Word got passed round for all the vendors to gather in front of Riccardo's shop.



*Figure 41: Crisis Meeting, photo by author (28<sup>th</sup> March 2012)*

There, Omar told the assembled vendors that there was going to be a protest in front of City Hall the following morning at 10 am. He spoke first in Wolof and then in Italian, asking them to make sure they were on time and to bring their children.

The group of vendors that crowded round Omar to seek guidance were Senegalese, Guinean, Nigerian Egyptian and Italian. The practical decision to communicate the decision to march in two languages marked a turning point in the nature of the struggle. Not only was it clearly time for direct, organised political action to be taken; this action had to be taken collectively and they would have to speak together, despite their different interests and despite the difficulties of communication. Many of the Senegalese vendors, in late middle age, were deeply conservative people. They had historically always relied on their Mourid trade networks and their faith to live

autonomous mercantile lives. This was clearly no longer possible and I wondered how it felt to be working with some of the politically radical members of the antiracist community who crowded around to help. I also found it interesting that the undocumented vendors who ran stalls around the edge of the regulated market also joined in. There were practical reasons for this. Although most of them had no hope of regulating either their visa or work status through this protest, they relied on the legitimacy of Via Bologna market in order to ply their own trade in contraband sunglasses and accessories. But I felt it was more than that. What had happened made it clear that, in moments of crisis, one black man was as good as any other in the search for a folk devil scapegoat. Any legitimacy gained would only ever be contingent and, in terms of survival, there was really no difference between them and the aged vendors within Via Bologna.

29th March 2012



Figure 42: Demonstration in front of City Hall, photos by author (29<sup>th</sup> March 2012)

All the vendors arrived on time for the protest and were given placards to hold which had been made by members of the antiracist scene, also in attendance. A market stall was set up as symbol of the livelihood that had been removed from them. Omar started off proceedings by taking a megaphone (above) and greeting the mayor,

explaining why they were gathered there and telling him he should be ashamed about targeting migrants in this way and leaving over eighty families without money to live on. After this different street vendors took turns taking the microphone and shouting at the vacant windows of City Hall. Alfonso used his time with the mic to express his solidarity with his 'migrant brothers', united in struggle. He eloquently stated that they all knew their lot: they would never be able to rent a shop and so were considered lesser people. For them, he said, the market was a means of survival and they had been messed around for months now. He told them that City Hall did not understand how business worked, and they should be working with the traders to help them find the best places to make a living. Comfort took the mic and urged them to help her and her family survive by opening up the market again. Then Omar convinced Elijah, the eleven-year-old son of one of the Nigerian vendors to say a few words:



Figure 43; Elijah takes the mic, photo by author (29<sup>th</sup> March 2012)

Elijah took a breath and started shouting at De Magistris directly, calling him a ‘woman’ and a ‘coward’. ‘Fuck!’ he shouted ‘come down here and face us. Because of you my mum can’t buy food. I was born in this country but I don’t feel welcome here. We look different but we are all equal!’ Many people had started crying, and an unknown Neapolitan man grabbed Elijah and kissed him on the head. I went over to him to ask him if he knew the young man or his mum. He told me he had never met them before but was moved by their situation as it mirrored his own. He was a member of the Precari Bros. and there with the continued occupation the organisation was holding in the square in front of City Hall. Since his unemployment benefits had been cut he no longer knew how to feed his family. He told me that the previous month he had come to City Hall and poured petrol all over himself, intending to set fire to himself in protest. He said that fortunately some people had managed to stop him before he lit the lighter.

The high emotional charge on the day of the protest crystallised many of the intersecting social interests and experiences of disenfranchised people in Naples. The Battle for Via Bologna, like the suicide attempt at the beginning of this chapter, came to symbolise multiple instances of suffering and struggle. This was clear in the insults and exhortations hurled from a distance at the councillors sitting inside City Hall as well as in the collective grief we all expressed towards each other. It was also, of course, a public performance of defiance. The councillors may have been at a safe distance, but there were journalists and police nearby who were taking note of what was happening. Elijah’s image, and his words, appeared in all the major news outlets that day, along with an accusation of racism against City Hall. Mayor De Magistris took to twitter to say he was ‘offended’ by this. For a mayor who had always positioned himself as liberal and open-minded, the direct accusations of migrant scapegoating and racism were very

embarrassing. The idea of the family and business acumen were two important themes raised in the contentious addresses of the protesters, which proclaimed street vending as a dignified survival strategy, worthy of greater respect. Voloshinov argued that the sign has an ‘inner dialectic quality’ that allows it to be reflected and refracted through different social interests and transform itself at moments of social struggle (1984, p.24). The contentious addressed of the Via Bologna vendors showed the ways in which dominant discourses – about the moral dignity of working, about racism being a bad thing – informed the resistant discourse of different subordinated people in ways that were multiaccentual and dialogical (Scott 1990, p.102). Although they had lost a month of pay, the vendors were, at least in part, victorious. The council waited until 2<sup>nd</sup> April to announce that the market would re-open as a temporary fair, free of charge, until the re-organised market was ready to open.

## Concluding Thoughts

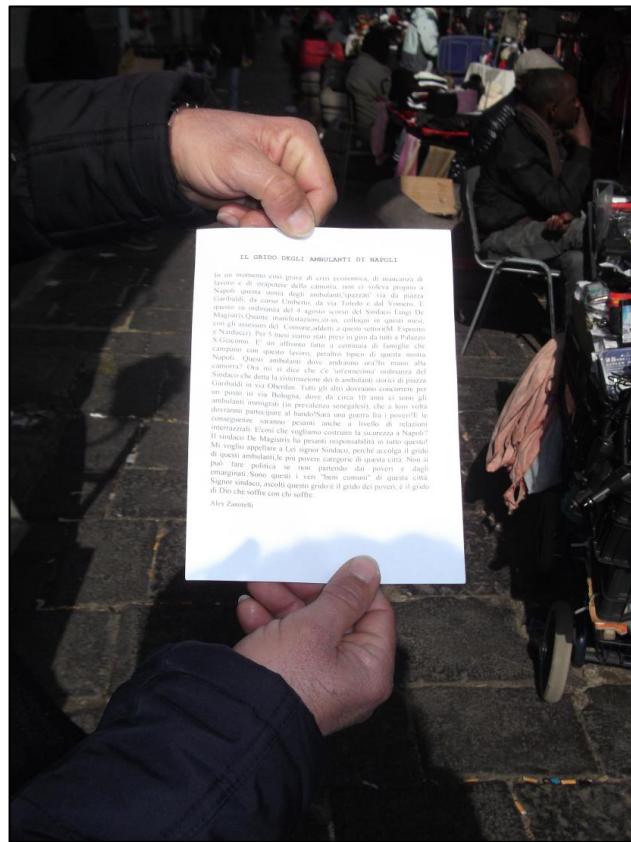


Figure 44: 'The Cry of the Neapolitan Street Vendor', photo by author (February 2012)

In this chapter I have discussed the ways in which street vendors in Naples, faced with the loss of their livelihoods and the tragedy of their own disposability, explored transcultural and multilingual possibilities for political discourse and action. In doing so I have looked at the 2011-2012 period as a particular moment of socioeconomic and political emergency in the city, connected to wider global events and processes. Early on in the war that municipal authorities declared upon street markets the Combonian missionary Father Alex Zanotelli wrote a letter (above) addressed to Mayor De Magistris, accusing him of fomenting a war amongst the poor by pitting migrant and Neapolitan street vendors against each other in the fight for diminishing market spots. However, the efforts made by the state institutions to divide different groups of

subordinated street vendors along racialised lines were mitigated both by everyday acts of transcultural collaboration against adversity, as well as by the decision to march together against City Hall and publicly denounce their divisive actions. In the first part of the chapter I explored how the suicide epidemic that was spreading through Italy at the time acted symbolically to organise the ways in which powerless people responded to the fact of their own disposability. This response both maintained, dismantled and produced racialised meanings about belonging and positionality in street markets. In part two I showed how the black street vendor has been transformed into a folk devil, responsible for all social ills in Naples. I developed this, in part two of the chapter, when I examined how Via Bologna African market was victimised as part of a campaign on the part of City Hall to get rid of both regulated and unregulated street vending around the Piazza Garibaldi redevelopment site.

Different kinds of contentious language articulated the struggle that took place in the street markets around the Ferrovia. The city's long cohabitation with suffering has generated a local web of imagery – of death, disease, foreign threat and rubbish – through which threat is conceptualised, managed and survived. This genre about death and dying cohabited and coalesced with another sort of contentious discourse, which took inspiration from a long history of rights discourses. When managing instances of daily adversity – like police patrols or municipal threats of closure – the combined weight of these cultural languages allowed the subordinated vendors around the Ferrovia to develop a sense of a being part of a transcultural local-popular, although not consistently and not in ways that were completely transformative of race relations in the city. With the support of local activists, the political language of the local-popular could also be translated into direct action when they marched on City Hall and demanded to keep their livelihoods. Although the battle for Via Bologna was partial and ambiguous

in its achievements, it did at least temporarily, establish forms of group identity that I understood as being based on Glissant's (1981; 1997) notion of Relation, a pragmatic acceptance of difference as fluid and constantly diversifying. The invaluable aid of different campaigning groups – the CGIL union, A3f, the Antiracist Forum etc. – contributed to the formation of an organised struggle and fought to translate the contentious language of the pavements up to the debates going on in politics and the media. The contentious language of the people who were attempting to resist the weight of their own disposability revealed the ways in which the powerless can partially mitigate the effects of violence and oppression by the powerful.

## Conclusion: Rebuilding the Tower

Throughout this thesis I have presented the typical situations of transcultural talk in Neapolitan street markets in order to tell a story about race relations around the Ferrovia in Naples today. I have demonstrated that conviviality is not a simple activity but the product of compromise and forbearance, where genuine reciprocity, collaborative performances, rubbing alongside, and bitter resentment co-exist uncomfortably together. These processes need to be understood within the wider political context of economic crisis and the excess or waste (Bauman 2004) people that have been created by global neoliberalism. Multicultural Naples must also be envisioned as a city on the edge of one of the world's spaces of emergency, where economic survival strategies are shaped by the legal and extra-legal hierarchies that have come to epitomise the functioning of Fortress Europe. The kinds of tragedy that characterised the lives of the people I worked with for my research provided the principal framework within which contemporary racialised convivialities and conflicts were worked out. The fact that the same people were capable of this range of both negative and positive intersubjective interactions shows that the desire and imperative to get on with each other often diverged from the urgent need to change one's own circumstances within the wider political and economic situation. I found that particular ways of talking were central to the ambivalent mediation of these tensions. As such, Bakhtin's writings about speech genres (1981; 1984; 1986) were useful in helping me to organise the typical situations and themes of talk in markets into a heteroglossia of genres that dialogically governed the relationship between language and cultural meaning-making in these difficult conditions. These assertions from the field data make it possible to ask a number of useful questions about the compulsion to communicate with each other across intersubjective boundaries, and

the lengths to which power is able to reach in disuniting those joined by oppression. I will now discuss the different speech genres presented in each chapter in order to explore possible answers to these questions.

I started my examination of the cultural languages of the Neapolitan pavement by looking at the money-making activities taking place there; thus setting the scene for the kinds of transcultural interaction that happen in and around street markets in Naples. Hegemonic discourses about street markets as deviant and disorderly acted as a backdrop to the activities of barter and exchange that took place. In the first part of the chapter I examined the different discourses through which people in and around street markets defended or attacked street vending. Some positioned it as part of the dignified and ancient logic of getting by (*l'arte di arrangiarsi*), and some as akin to other disputed and illegal practices that happened on pavements, like begging and scamming. In the second part of the chapter I turned to the market cries – the types of language through which people called out to potential clients, bartered and struck deals, and sustained their right to act within the dynamics of the street. These market cries varied according to the particular requirements of the context. Different languages – particularly Neapolitan and English – and a particular style of delivery were key to successful negotiations. This was even more true at a time when people were without work and street markets were either doing badly or facing eviction and closure. Both the discourses about street vending and the market cries of street vending itself revealed the indirect ways in which power, ideological hierarchies and the legal context worked through people's lives. The multilingual pragmatism and humourous speech of the street vendor were the ways in which they sought to resist and dismantle the calls for their exclusion. As such I argued that the art of getting by through street vending could be

could be seen as a quasi-political act of survival carried out by subaltern people with few weapons at their disposal.

In Chapter 5, other kinds of more intimate sociality emerged alongside the earning activities happening in street markets. Like the pragmatic acceptance of difference that drove the processes of barter in the previous chapter, these were also the consequence of Naples' history as a port and city on the racialised edge of Europe. However, the brutal nature of this sociality betrayed a history of subordinated Neapolitan pride, colonial ideas about black masculinity, and the sexual preserves governing the behaviour of women in public space. This was the non-explicit context within which Neapolitan men enforced particular sorts of community separation on the pavement, both consensually and non-consensually. Humorous language was central to the ways in which forms of fraternal horizontality were ambivalently explored and power was exercised. I identified two speech genres that governed these forms of transcultural interaction: banter between men and catcalling directed at women, migrant men and interracial couples. Banter about sex, women, and football, as well as verbal aggression and playfighting worked both to establish existing and innovative masculine imageries and defuse tensions, as well as to dominate and enforce differential male hierarchies. Catcalling functioned more simply as a silencing tactic and power slapdown that provided the men perpetrating them with much pleasure and amusement. The processes by which the sexual conventions of the pavement were produced, maintained, or disrupted through different types of banter and catcalling cannot be understood separately from the framework of precariousness and disposability that weighed down on the lives of people in Naples. Although sexual violence exists across class and racial divides, their brutal and darkly humorous language was a way in which these particular men sought to mitigate, and find relief from, the tragedy of their lives.

At the beginning of this thesis I made the argument that Naples' particular history of political, economic and cultural subordination made the question of language key to understanding transcultural meaning-making in the city's street markets. Having explored the ways in which this worked within the everyday context of life in street markets I then turned to those moments in which the topic of language use itself became the subject of people's conversations and allowed them to meditate upon questions of difference, belonging and positionality. I argued that this meditation, or talking about talk, was important because it gave people the chance to work through the painful and joyful ways in which power and processes of racialisation had impacted upon their lives and brought them all together, for better or worse. In the first two parts of the chapter I looked at two ways in which talking about talk made space for an improvisational, transcultural sharing and collaboration, through both formal and informal episodes of cultural mediation, as well as through informal pedagogical opportunities. These episodes were ambivalent and multiaccentual in their effect, with ideas about difference being refracted and reflected through the various interests of the people involved in the conversation. Convivial openings existed alongside power games, closure, exclusion and rejection. In the second part of the chapter I looked at how talk about talk allowed people to reflect directly upon the power dynamics that had shaped their lives, in ways they had been forced to simply adapt to and accept. In part three I attended to the question of the fate of Neapolitan-ness, by exploring data in which my research participants talked about intergenerational cultural transmission by talking about how their children spoke. In part four I pinpointed the question of speaking English – the language of cultural imperialism and globalisation – as central to people's feelings of loss, powerlessness, inferiority and exclusion.

In the following chapter I continued to attend to the theme of language attitudes by seeking to demarcate the definitive boundary at which the ambivalent transcultural socialities of the three previous chapters broke down and failed. This breakdown was constituted as a failure of people's ability to communicate although, in reality, it signified a refusal or rejection of the Other that was perfectly well understood both by the refuser and the refused. In part one I explored racist insults and aggression on the part of Neapolitan people that acted to silence and dominate migrants. In part two I introduced data where people expressed the conviction of not being able to understand the Other and, tied to this in part three, the conviction of not being able to be understood by the Other. These racialised language attitudes betrayed a pulsation towards a monolingual and nationalist notion of belonging that had to openly reject and deny Naples' multilingual and multicultural heritage. The people doing this were seeking to survive off the space of the pavement in the same way as their migrant colleagues. They bought into arguments that connected economic stagnation to immigration because it represented the possibility of them overcoming their own abjection. The brutalisation of their communication was a way in which they sought to take back some agency and alleviate the pain of their marginalisation and social exclusion. This was expressed through language tactics that betrayed strongly held convictions of the Other's alterity and incomprehensibility. Instead of talking to each other, they talked past, on top of, through, and in spite of each other.

Finally I turned to the explicit ways in which state policies and their implementation on the ground came to threaten the continued existence of street market survival practices in Naples whilst I was in the field. During this time, national austerity measures kicked in, and local municipal authorities sought to get rid of the city's unwanted or excess problems. I charted the vendors' response to the spate of suicides and attempted suicides

that swept the city as business slowed dramatically and crackdowns on both licensed and unlicensed street vending were brought into force. I noted that both migrant and Neapolitan vendors sought to contextualise these problems through a speech genre that evoked imaginaries of death, decay and barrenness. This placed current difficulties within a Neapolitan history of suffering and hunger that, whilst depressing, actually provided a framework within which the unsurvivable became survivable as people found ways to carry on. Although migrant and Neapolitan vendors were pitted against each other in the struggle for diminishing market spaces and credibility, the events they collectively experienced also worked to bring them together and forge a transcultural local-popular capable of speaking back to power and making change happen. Their lament of death coalesced with another speech genre: a contentious rights talk that allowed for the generation and articulation of anti-hegemonic ideologies which could be put into action in the case of both spontaneous and organised instances of political resistance. This politics of local solidarity was, by necessity, multilingual and multicultural as well as being fraught with ambivalent multiaccentualities and crossed purposes. Although their success may have been partial and provisional – whether it was Neapolitan barmen helping Senegalese vendors escape police patrols, or official marches against City Hall with the antiracist crowd in tow – the actions of the Piazza Garibaldi street vendors provide an important record of how the powerless can withstand and overcome the fate of their own disposability.

The vendors on Neapolitan pavements were bound together by an instability of means and opportunity that is fast becoming the norm in both north and south. This instability was matched by the improvisational flexibility with which they conducted their working lives and together renegotiated their relationship with power and domination.

Postcolonial Naples in 2012 presented a particular picture of the kinds of transcultural

interaction that have to happen in the age of globalisation. Newcomers were arriving in the city from all over the world, having been displaced by war, natural disaster, plain lack of work and a combination of all the above. They were following the trail of voices that told them ‘here is a good point of entry’ and ‘here you can perhaps make something of yourself’. That, simply, is how it was, and is still. They, who are the waste of modernity elsewhere, are joining those in Naples who have also been disposed of and often get stuck, because there is no longer anywhere for the world’s excess people to go (Bauman 2004, pp.5-6).

Throughout the chapters, power differentials and political or economic tensions shaped the way in which people communicated with each other. The multifarious languages being spoken – like Italian, Neapolitan, Wolof and English – occupied different symbolic statuses within emotional trajectories of movement and struggle. They also had racialised ideologies and painful histories attached to them; and so their use, and the styles of their delivery, enacted different symbolic purposes in transcultural pavement interactions. The dichotomy of speaking Italian or Neapolitan connected to the wounded narrative of Italian nation building and the nurturing of a subaltern local street cred that granted or denied respect to the people making their livings on the street. The need to speak English was a constant reminder of the cultural supremacy of the US and the lack of control that they could exert within the world economy. This feeling of inferiority, filtered through the memory of returnee emigrants speaking ‘Americano’, was further complicated by the fact of having to try and speak English to other Others, likewise caught up in the tide of global capital and the legacy of modernity. Other languages like Wolof, Pidgin and Bengali, introduced by people previously only known through an embedded knowledge of colonialism, were partially integrated into transcultural talk where it was expedient to do so and where bridges needed to be built. The people

working in Neapolitan street markets often did not have full mastery over the languages in which they communicated with each other. They were always translating and their daily linguistic toil was frequently difficult and incomplete. And yet communication was nearly always successful, even if it could shift between a transcultural positive and negative.

So what can this teach us about the realities of living within and across a constantly shifting plateau of difference? What levels of social organisation and control are really necessary for us all to organise our lives together? Despite difficulties and breakdowns, the people who participated in my project were able to live with the multilingual opacity that surrounded them. Speaking these languages together represented a pragmatic choice to do with the need to live, act, and survive in the face of tragedy (Ries 1997, p.51). But it was also more than this. I follow Glissant's (1991; 1997) argument that this pragmatic acceptance of difference represented an ideological pulsation towards a constantly shifting unity of divers. People made new and transformative cultural meanings about belonging, difference and positionality simply by living with the opaque nature of intersubjective Relation, and without seeking to define and fix down the nature of their relationships with those around them. This rather banal statement has important implications for understanding the contemporary stakes of race and racism, both in Naples and elsewhere. The global movement of people creates a mobile, multilingual babel in all those locations where transcultural encounters occur, and the result is not chaos but an ever-changing and interactive amalgamation of difference. Although this counterpoetics is ambivalent and difficult it represents the rebuilding of the tower 'in every language' that Glissant referred to as a key political aspiration to strive for in the postcolonial world (1997, p.109). This is not something that institutions and governments can do much to either encourage or repress, despite the frequent stated

intentions to do so. We can no more stop the multilingual babel of late capitalism than we can prevent the actions and movement of people looking for choice and opportunities. The cultural languages of the people signify the power of their collective drive.

Those of us who study and mobilise against racism today must also cultivate opacity as a political choice. At the beginning of the thesis I explained that race relations are often articulated in terms of a binary of knowledge versus ignorance. I have regularly been told that people are racist because they are ignorant and when they come to know the Other properly then all will be well. Of course this argument about convivial multiculture is partially true. It's also partially true that particular kinds of sedimented knowledge of the formally-colonised Other influence the ways in which they are treated or mistreated when they migrate for work and opportunity. It's possible to trace the history of this knowledge through people's words and actions. This is an important task because we do need to better understand the ways in which Naples, and other places on the racialised edge of Europe, are part of their own postcolonial legacy of modernity. By understanding the history of what has happened on the edge, we can also better and further dismantle the kinds of violent categorisations, exclusions and essentialisations that continue to mar postcolonial or colonial locales across the world. But the people in the Neapolitan street markets I worked in show that it is neither knowledge nor ignorance that truly shapes their intersubjective relationships with racialised Others. Rather it is their matter-of-fact acceptance of the opaque and ultimately unknowable nature of difference, and their willingness to interact and collaborate with each other despite the local, national and international context of race and the difficulties of comprehension. We must join them in insisting that our analysis remains both multilingual and opaque in its presentation of the social world. To do this we need to

cultivate a sociology that is open to the ways in which attention to language helps us to answer important questions about wider material inequalities and struggles over power. We also need to expand and defend the diverse positionalities and interests of scholars doing empirical research so that a breadth of local contexts are understood and connected up to wider structures. And we need to continue to use empirical research to honestly, and without compromise, represent the actions and choices of the people we work with.

Even more urgently, this thesis goes from fairly light to very dark because, put quite simply, it's crunch time for street vendor's in Naples now. Unlicensed and undesired market spaces are being closed down and vendors evicted. When I was last in Naples I walked around the Ferrovia and found many of the main streets empty of vendors where previously they had crowded all the space on the edge of the pavement. Via Bologna and Poggioreale markets were still there but were lethargic and quiet. I wondered how the vendors were supporting themselves. The possibilities of anti-hegemonic cultural renewal are made extremely difficult in the face of the death and waste of markets because Neapolitan markets are very particular spaces of horizontal and transformative place-making struggle. They represent the possibility for encounters across the boundaries of difference that are impossible in other contexts where Neapolitans meet migrants in the rest of the city. Humour is central to the ways in which this encounter takes place, in circumstances that can both up-end and reinstate power differentials and racialised hierarchies. It is above all the double-edged humour that can be exercised in markets that creates the possibility of convivial openings and violent closures against difference, and the grain of both possibilities resides in the same people. As Hewitt also noted in his research (1986, pp.235-58), the frequently humorous linguistic strategies invoked by my research participants were part of a collective antiracism that sought to

exorcise racism and racial knowledge through an ambivalent playful language that walked a fine line between abuse and companionableness. I have tried in this thesis to define where things broke down, where there were limits, and where events on the pavement coalesced upwards and formed into collective struggles that generated links between street vendors and activists. Passerini said that in 1968 the anti-hegemonic laughter of the Italian piazza got fed up to and integrated into the linguistic cultural guerilla tactics of university students fighting for social change (1988, pp.112-114). I have shown that this possibility for change is still there in the linkages between migrants, students and the activist networks in Naples.

## Appendices

### Appendix One: Context of field sites within Naples

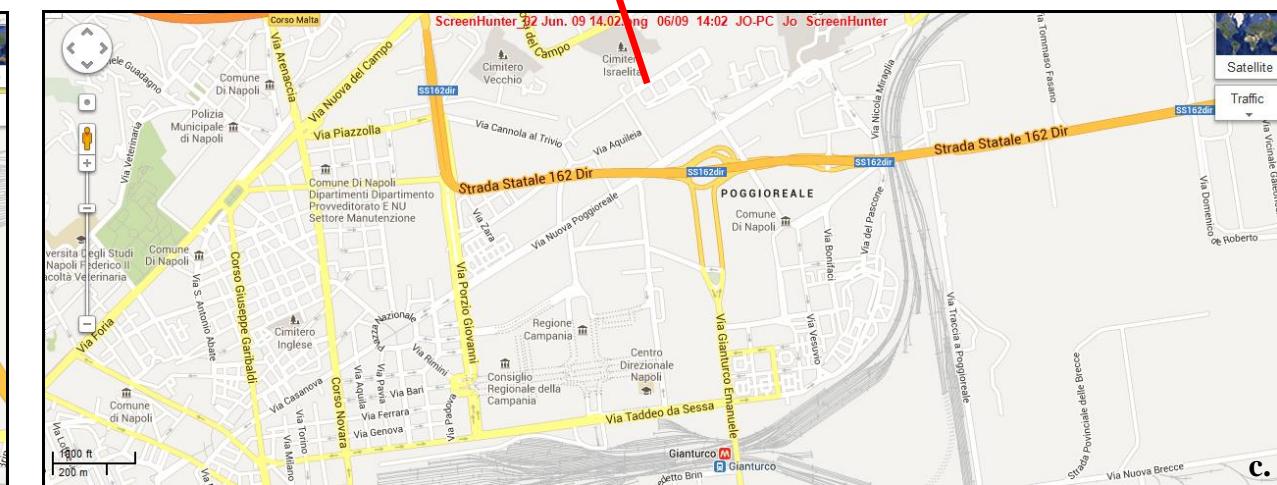
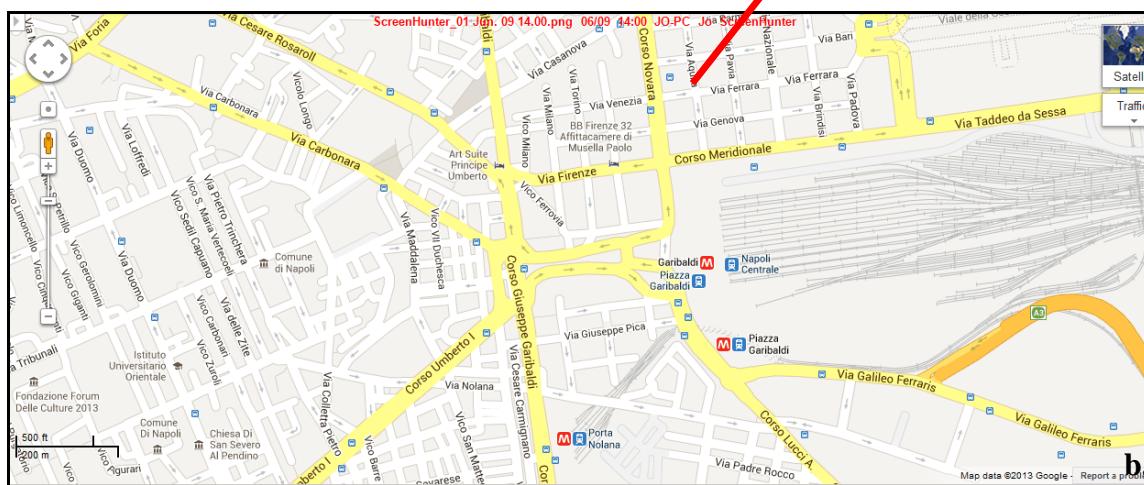
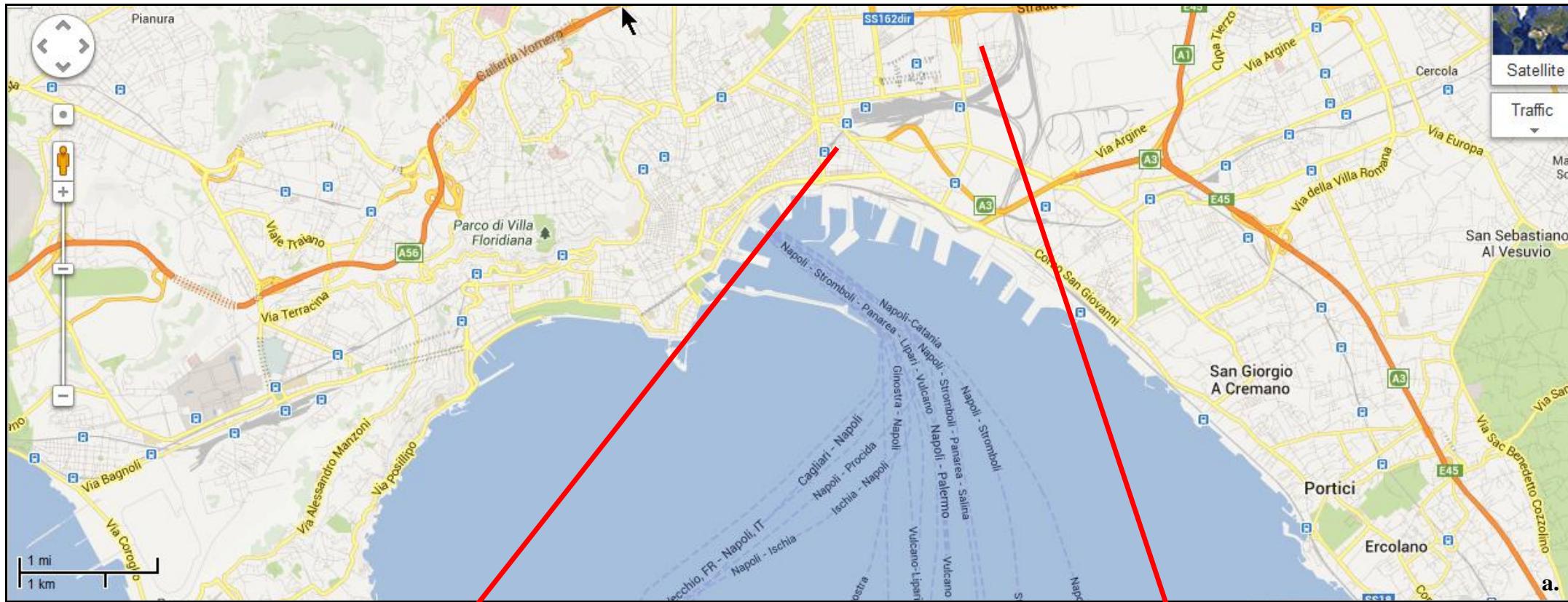


Figure a: Overview of Central Naples (Google Maps 2013)

Figure b: Fieldwork Sites around Piazza Garibaldi train station (Google Maps 2013)

Figure c: Poggioreale Market (Google Maps 2013)

## Appendix Two: Glossary of Research Participants

### Via Bologna

**Alfonso:** He has a knick-knack stall next to Gennaro's stall and the two men are cousins. He is politically active in local movements for the unemployed.

**Augusto:** A Neapolitan man, also friends with Gennaro but not working on the market. They both attend the same evangelical church.

**Comfort:** A 56 year old Nigerian woman. She has been running a market stall in the Piazza Garibaldi area for twenty years and has known Gennaro for a long time. She also used to run an internet point, but the business failed. Her stall used to sell wax cloth but she now sells Chinese-manufactured clothing.

**Elage:** A middle-aged Senegalese man. His stall sells Kola Nuts, tea and toiletries that African clients look for.

**Gennaro:** A middle-aged Neapolitan man who sells socks and underwear from his stall on Via Bologna. He has had a stall in the Piazza garibaldi area since the early 1990s and prior to that he owned a shop. He is politically active in local movements for the unemployed.

**Moussa:** A young Malian man who is friends with Gennaro. He shares Gennaro's storage depot with him.

**Riccardo:** A middle-aged Neapolitan man who owns the souvenir/sex shop which acts as the organisational hub of the market. He used to be a business man.

**Serigne:** A middle-aged Senegalese man who runs a stall at the market and is the informal market manager. He used to work for Riccardo and has maintained a strong friendship with him.

**Sohna:** She is also Senegalese and Serigne's wife. She runs a mobile food stall that sells sandwiches to stall holders and market clients. The stall is based outside Riccardo's shop.

### Irregular Pitches

**Ibra:** A Senegalese man in his early thirties who sells Italian-made hats from a cloth on the pavement on one of the main roads in the city centre. He has been in Italy for seven years and is still in the process of regularizing his status there.

**Giovanni:** He owns the grocers behind Mohammed's stall. The two men are firm friends.

**Salvatore:** A Neapolitan man in his thirties. He works as a doorman for the apartment block next to Mohammed's stall

**Mimmo:** He owns a shop next to Salvatore's apartment block.

**Modou:** A Senegalese man in his early thirties. His unregulated stall sells contraband designer handbags and wallets. He also ships packages abroad to Northern Italy and France. He has had a lot of trouble with visa applications, due to arrests for selling contraband.

**Carlo:** A Neapolitan man in his early sixties. He lives in the area and has been friends with Modou since he first put his pitch on the street.

**Ku:** A Chinese man in his late twenties. He runs an electronics stall on one of the major roads in the city centre. He is married and has two children. His family (including wife and mother- and father-in-law) run a shop in Pompei also selling electronic goods. He has a work visa and right to vend from a moving stall.

## Poggiooreale

### **Eddy Pell Stall:**

**Ciro and Titti:** They are a married Neapolitan couple that run this stall in the market. They also sell Italian designer branded bags and purses from a shop in the Piazza Mercato neighbourhood of Naples.

**Enzo:** Titti's dad. He used to work at the Fiat factory in nearby Pomigliano, but was made redundant and works on the stall to supplement his pension.

### **Peppe's Bags Stall:**

**Alessandro:** A Neapolitan man in his thirties who owns this stall with his dad, Renato. The stall sells Italian-brand bags as well as Chinese imports.

**Peppe:** He is Alessandro's dad. The stall is part of a family business, with a shop in the Borgo Sant'Antonio neighbourhood.

**Anton:** A Ukrainian man who works for Peppe's Bags.

**Christopher:** A Togolese man who works for Peppe's Bags.

**Ade:** A Nigerian client of Peppe's Bags.

## The Train Journey in Chapter Six

**Ahmed:** A Moroccan man, friends with Besi.

**Giuliano:** A Neapolitan man from my family village who went to school with my cousin. His work frequently takes him abroad to areas of Eastern Europe such as Croatia.

**Besi:** An Albanian man who has come to Italy to set up his own tattoo shop.

**Giuseppe:** A young Neapolitan man who has trained as an artist and is currently without work.

**Piero:** A Polish man who knows the South of Italy well but has mainly always worked in the North.

### Gatekeepers and Members of the Antiracist Scene

**Omar:** A cultural mediator, antiracist activist and current president of Naples' Senegalese Association. He was one of my most important gatekeepers in the research.

**Luisa:** Also a cultural mediator who works with Omar at a migrant advice bureau near Piazza Garibaldi.

**Carmela:** Another cultural mediator who introduced me to a group of Roma women in Chapter Five.

### Appendix Three: Glossary of Translation Terms

***Italics:*** Neapolitan. Most likely a Neapolitanised Italian or an Italianised Neapolitan, depending on who was speaking and to whom they were speaking. Very few people in my research spoke a dialect that was completely un-mediated by Italian or by a different first language, like Wolof. For some this was a natural way of speaking. For others, using something that could loosely be recognised as Neapolitan indicated something more significant about their interactions with other people.

**Normal:** Italian. Most likely an accented, regional Italian. Many of my Neapolitan research participants made the effort to speak predominantly in a local or regional Italian around migrant interlocutors and I, as they wanted to ease comprehension. My research participants were speaking Italian as a second language and often had not had the opportunity to study the language formally, so they made occasional syntactical and grammatical errors.

**Underlined:** Transcription of words in the original language, not translated.

****Bold:**** Descriptions of the scene.

**...:** Indicates pauses and parts of the discussion that I have decided not to transcribe because they weren't central to the argument I was making or because they marked moments where the main discussion was interrupted by something else.

N.B. This glossary refers to all the dialogue recorded in the thesis.

## Appendix Four: Table of Figures

Figure 1: Markets, Protest, Rubbish and Decay, photos by Gennaro (March – May 2012) .....	84
Figure 2: Via Bologna, photo by author (February 2012) .....	88
Figure 3: Riccardo’s Shop on Via Bologna, photo by author (March 2012).....	90
Figure 4: Elage’s Stall, photo by author (April 2012) .....	92
Figure 5: Gennaro’s Stall, photo by author (February 2012).....	93
Figure 6: Alfonso’s stall, photo by author (February 2012) .....	93
Figure 7: Ibra’s stall, photo by author (March 2012).....	96
Figure 8: Modou’s Stall, photo by author (March 2012).....	98
Figure 9: Ku’s stall on Corso Novara, photo by author (April 2012) .....	99
Figure 10: Poggioreale, photo by author (February to March 2012) .....	100
Figure 11: Ciro at Eddy Pell, photo by author (February 2012) .....	102
Figure 12: Alessandro at Peppe’s Bags, photo by author (March 2012) .....	103
Figure 13: Via Bologna 1, photo by Gennaro (April 2012).....	115
Figure 14: Via Bologna 2, photo by Gennaro (March 2012) .....	116
Figure 15: Elderly Street Vendor, photo by Gennaro (March 2012) .....	119
Figure 16: Pop-Up Roma Market, photo by author (December 2010) .....	129
Figure 17: Abandoned Goods After Police Raid, photo by author (June 2014).....	130
Figure 18: My Lucky Numbers, photo by author (March 2012) .....	132
Figure 19: Selecting, Bartering and Interpreting, photos by author (April 2012). From left to right in bottom photo: Alessandro, Ade’s sister, Ade, and Giuseppe.....	150
Figure 20: Shrine to Diego Armando Maradona, photo by author (March 2012) .....	177
Figure 21: Giuseppe and Christopher at work, photo by author (April 2012).....	182
Figure 22: Omar and I checking my field notes, photo by Serigne (July 2012) .....	194

Figure 23: Abramo, Elage and Serigne at Elage's stall, photo by author (February 2012) .....

196

Figure 24: Ibra, Giovanni (right) and colleague (left) stand laughing in front of Giovanni's grocery. Salvatore asked not to be in the photo. Photo by author, (March 2012).....

218

Figure 25: The stall, the market and the pavement. Photo by Gennaro, (March 2012) 223

*Figure 26: African Food Store on Via Bologna, photo by author, (February 2012)* ..232

*Figure 27: Haggling and Negotiating at Mister Tony's stall, Poggioreale Market, photo by author (March 2012)* .....

236

Figure 28: My Clients, photos by Titti, (April – June 2012) .....

238

Figure 29: Egg on the Pavement at Via Bologna, photo by author (April 25<sup>th</sup> 2012) ..247

Figure 30: Roma Performers on Circumvesuviana, photo by author (August 2013) ...260

Figure 31: Ku's Stall, photo by author (May 2012).....

264

Figure 32: Attempted Suicide at Via Torino CGIL, photos by Serigne (May 23rd 2012)

.....274

Figure 33: Political Activism, photos by author (25<sup>th</sup> May 2014) .....

277

Figure 34: Emergency Demonstration at Piazza Garibaldi, photo by author (4<sup>th</sup> June 2012) .....

280

Figure 35: Ibra Unable to Work, photo by author (April 2012).....

282

Figure 36: Scanning the Road, photo by author (April 2012).....

288

Figure 37: First March for Via Bologna, photo by author (31<sup>st</sup> January 2012) .....

300

Figure 38: Events of 7<sup>th</sup> March 2012, photos by author.....

310

Figure 39: The Finanza arresting Two Black Vendors, photo by author (7<sup>th</sup> March 2012)

.....312

Figure 40: Serigne and Omar checking vendor's documents at Via Bologna, photo by author (21 <sup>st</sup> March 2012).....	316
Figure 41: Crisis Meeting, photo by author (28 <sup>th</sup> March 2012).....	318
Figure 42: Demonstration in front of City Hall, photos by author (29 <sup>th</sup> March 2012) .	320
Figure 43; Elijah takes the mic, photo by author (29 <sup>th</sup> March 2012).....	321
Figure 44: 'The Cry of the Neapolitan Street Vendor', photo by author (February 2012) .....	324

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