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THE LAND OF “GOMORRAH” TOLD
BY ITS INHABITANTS: “SCAMPIA TO US”

This article emerged from the voices heard among the streets of Scampia, where there exist a number of associations aimed at the provision of social services and support of cultural policies¹ as well as groups of citizens structured in self-managed forms with no legal record, aiming at the vindication of their territory to solve individual problems through a wider collective prospective in relation to the “*quartiere*”-neighbourhood within the suburb they belong to.

A note of clarification is needed on the term “quartiere” or neighbourhood, where the confining boundaries are clearly defined and well known among its residents but are untraceable on the institutional territorial maps of Naples. However, in 2005 the administrative reform merged the existing Neapolitan constituencies into a new macro-component called “Municipality”,² attributing new powers and new responsibilities in accordance with the process of decentralisation and reunification³ of the administrative power. Once again, there was another formal and substantial cleave of the Neapolitan districts which had already been reorganized

¹ See map in L. Mascellaro *Territorialità e camorra: una proposta di lettura geografica dell'attività criminale*, [in:] G. Gribaudo (ed.), *Traffici criminali. Camorra, mafie e reti internazionali dell'illegalità*, Torino 2009, p. 424.

² These were established by the deliberations n.13 on 10th February, n.15 on 11th February, n.21 on 16th February, n.29 on 1st March and n.68 on 21st September 2005 on behalf of the City Council of Naples.

³ In detail, the existing twenty-one districts have been converted into ten municipalities, thus decentralizing administration to enhance wider organizational autonomy.

geographically and departmentalised into quarters, “patches” or “cut outs”, in replacement of the existing church territorial units or parishes.⁴ What we are witnessing is a dissimilarity between institutional charted classifications of subdivisions within the metropolis, with the actual visual layouts, which are pictured as “zones” incorporated in a much wider area, and where local town council offices are ready to provide public service points for dwellers.

In fact, spontaneous groups and organizations referred to in this article interact with Municipality public bodies, not only for their cultural affinity and advisory services⁵ but also for their spatial proximity, turning into tiny neighbouring “parliament houses” in response to and at the service of public need. However, the very nature of these solicitations are certainly not limited to these official bodies, which openly cover institutions placed in higher positions; they are privileged references, material, and moreover testimonials of social documentation given by those subjects who were interviewed. It should be noted that our study came about within the field of legal practice and social consultations⁶ held on site, which gave us the opportunity to establish trustworthy and frank relations with many of those who engage in these environments. We witnessed circumstances and situations which are simultaneously underestimated and chronically oversized by the press. Particularly, the request to be heard came from those who were accused by the media of undertaking action for personal speculative reasons.

A certain amount of protagonism is seen in the pride and in the outcry of wanting to clarify the general knowledge that Scampia is a free zone of criminals, a no man’s land, a city fortress⁷ inhabited by Camorristi.⁸ This culpably disclaims the presence of a majority of honest people, and, with reference to another area in

⁴ Due to the following: “right neighbourhoods, rationalized, less populated, with a strong administrative unit, with the police force taking over power along with the Home Ministry at the cost of magistrate fairness, a self management that differed from public order”. Added to this reform we should trace special structure of the Neapolitan organized crime. See M. Marmo, [in:] A. Cozzutto, *The ideological descriptions of the Camorra; what do we really talk about, when we talk about the Camorra?*, <http://www.dotduepuntozero.org>.

⁵ Regarding assistance in social activity within municipality boundaries (county councils must ensure uniformity in administrating events in council space) are administrative services, hosting sites, business, craftsmanship, demographic services, traffic, and urban hygiene, schools, culture and local sport.

⁶ Obviously, free of charge, even as regards those interventions made by the writer’s friends.

⁷ Emerged from an irrational urban project that developed – with good or bad intentions – in remote suburbs and badly connected to the city centre as well as to other Neapolitan neighbourhoods, especially stations, hospitals, cultural centres. It is noteworthy to point out that Scampia has been connected to other areas by rail only in recent times, which has contributed to its isolation and growing desolation. However, in 1985 there was the project of running the underground as far north as possible, and this included stops at Monte Rosa. See, De Falco, *Line 10*, http://web.tiscalinet.it/defalco_ivanoefraspori/reti/linea10.html.

⁸ See the review: *Napoli... Serenata calibro 9*, http://www.bibliocamorra.altervista.org/index.php?option=com_content&id=176:napoli-serenata-calibro-9&Itemid=48R; by L. Duraccio on M. Ravveduto.

which illegality forms a civil team, existing social problems are attributed to the presence of Camorra organizations. Problems which are on the one hand the effects, but on the other hand central signs, widespread in the illicit world (not surprisingly coinciding with territories in the world which have a high percentage of problems); furthermore, their settings and constitutions are so vast that it is difficult to define boundaries which outline the so called “grey areas” (This is not only limited to the area of Scampia nor to the most disadvantaged segments of the population).⁹

Criticism is also extended to public or private structures (however relying on public finance) catering for social services, especially when beneficiary individuals and groups are considered as mere hetero-directed services. What is certain is that social activities, when operationally disconnected from the territory, sometimes seem to respond to the shortcomings of previous lax policies by acting as an illustrative value of welfare. Similarly, a guilt-political urban planning aims to heal the damage done by ‘segregationist’ practices in the second half of the twentieth century with mega-projects which are definitely beneficial but discordant in an area¹⁰ with great need of more accessible economic structures (such as, for example, light industries).

However, as regards a subjective/objective analysis, it is noteworthy to underline that from a methodological point of view, the choice of interviewing residents was based on their being representative of the context examined, and even though this may have led to some incoherence, there is a counterbalance in the authenticity¹¹ of the opinions and views expressed. Clearly, the direct content of material recorded¹² is not totally pertinent to the topics touched, but its aim is to make an additional contribution, perhaps limited but certainly truthful on sensitive and controversial matters. The material was collected by using cross-interviews, carried out by those who took part in the work itself. This did not cause social barriers (there was a slight fear of the outsiders’ judgment¹³ and some signs of exhibitionism in exaggerating the narration of their thoughts). On the contrary, taking into account the considerable freedom of expression¹⁴ – the structure of the conversations, in some ways flowing into a “stream of consciousness” – no reservations or hindrances were recorded in the interviewees relating their personal social condition and opinions. Special acknowledgements must be given to Armando Armando’s¹⁵ support and declarations. He is head of the Unemployment movement in Northern Naples,

⁹ Conversations held between Camorra structures and legal authority centres date back to: “being a class of Spanish vice-royalty, southern managers are used to mediating with the lower classes, including the various forms of power that arise”. See M. Marmo, *op. cit.*

¹⁰ An example is when there was the idea of transferring the university to Scampia, which would have been useful as it would have improved public transport services, but it would not have given a definite solution.

¹¹ It should be noted that the collected dialogues were recorded audio-visually.

¹² Roughly, the first months in 2013.

¹³ There were fears of legal consequence follow-ups.

¹⁴ From which the already mentioned fragmentary testimonies.

¹⁵ Authorizations to use names were personally given by those who were interviewed.

located at the former municipal social centre 90b Monte Rosa, which currently hosts Gridas (an acronym for “Gruppo Risveglio dal Sonno” literally translated in *Group awakening from sleep*). This structure has been the object – after about three decades of tacit agreements and civic institutions’ direct support – of (hasty)¹⁶ penal proceedings endorsed by *Istituto Autonomo Case Popolari*, the equivalent to The Institute of Town Council Housing.¹⁷ Armando’s undisputed charisma guaranteed the perception of a “serious” approach in those who took part in the project.¹⁸ The subjects involved wanted to give their contribution to bring forth this paper, made up of a series of individual – sometimes even collective – accounts and analyses of the specific social area as well as of the institutional and political context.

From this collection, common themes arise concerning not only traditional Neapolitan culture, but particular contexts in which they are embedded. Upmost was the theme of family, considered as a resource and responsibility, but also as an absence. The absence of family support becomes serious when relates to events that contrast with the natural course of existence. Here, we are symbolically referring to one of the interviewees’ tragic loss of her son, who was accidentally shot during a Camorra attack. In the mother’s story, her claim of her son’s innocence (in itself the emblem of maternal suffering when faced with the most unnatural of tragedies, a parent having to bury his/her child) shows all the difficulties she had to face because of a completely arbitrary prejudice implying a hypothesis of guilt – thoughts going along the lines of: *if something so serious has happened to somebody from the neighborhood, then probably there was something going on* – so as to justify murder. In this sense, when pain was most acute, the family had to fight against the terrible misconception that the boy was not an innocent victim of organized crime, but rather a guilty victim consciously killed in a war of the Camorra. Still today such an oddity is regarded as established, as though there is always something lurking, a hidden suspect. Moreover such a consideration does not only affect common opinion, *vox populi*, but also a certain logic withheld in state institutions, by MPs providing supporting evidence to such dramatic events. Thus, at best, among the common people and in acts, doubt on strange happenings is implicit in the judgment on the events.

On field, losses due to drugs are also significant, seen as a specific process causing other pathways, primarily that of prison (related to drug possession and drug trafficking).

In the narrative of all these problematic experiences, an intense relationship with God and religion came to light, God being seen as a resource in helping to bear

¹⁶ And after years of competent bodies’ disinterest.

¹⁷ The event in question brought solidarity among many civic groups and institutions themselves. Particularly emblematic was the President of the VIII municipality’s sealed note with which he hoped there were solutions that would not involve penal law.

¹⁸ After a discussion on the method to be followed in order to build a common framework for an interpretative grid, a certain amount of flexibility was given to the interviewer. This allowed him to benefit from the extemporary intuitions he might have in the formulation of the questions.

and cope with the difficulties. Religion and faith are reference points to continually look up to in future action and, even the more, in the aftermath of past errors.

A theme all the participants discussed was labour and their demand of employment. This is not surprising, given the specific environment and territorial area; to be more precise, it was the organization of the unemployed, including the concepts and notion of social dignity and social integration employment brings. However, labour "without qualifications" (*moonlighting, underpaid work*, and so on) is often considered utopist, a boundary which does not exist and where it is clearly impossible to tread along.

Only a minority referred to work in the key of assistance, which seemed to be the result of a passive mind-style of self-indulgence and justification.

On the other hand, it is not in a legal work of this kind that subsistence, primarily resulting from the structure of the extended family, should channel. It should be up to the social security system, which, unfortunately, is still not thought for the individual.¹⁹ The above mentioned resource, usually regarding the head of family, triggers systemically a well-known "family welfare". Our considerations on the above and to what is recorded on the national territory are completely the reverse (the elderly, with their contributory pension or invalidities are remedies and not "burdens", similarly to what happens in invalidity controls and checks relating to all those with disabilities).

Other means of sustainment or survival seem to come from the interspersed revenues on the "art of getting by," devising work and labour out of nothing. This is an old fangled skill which is surprisingly in strict accordance with the model of the new worker, who is "intuitive" as some have named²⁰ the system of a changing labour resulting from the fragmented and disruptive forms of the production system today. If the possibility of individual salvation is entrusted in hypothetical innate qualities, then there is no longer need of collective security mechanisms.²¹ For a long time, Neapolitans (well before globalization)²² have been masters in the art of reinventing themselves, creating new undefined roles in specific fields of work²³ in the virtue of necessity (and it is only in recent times that this flexibility has been recognized).²⁴ This would be sufficient to clearly distinguish the practices and values of the interviewees with those individuals who are Camorra subjects on

¹⁹ Incidentally, it is when family support is missing that various forms of social and economical disadvantages arise (an example are the "new poor", concerning men under separation or divorced).

²⁰ See E. Gellner, *Culture, identity and politics*, Cambridge 1987, p. 154 ff.

²¹ From this perspective, mechanisms of equalization concerning labour rights can no longer stand, having granted and justified its upbringing as being in opposition with civil law, and in some way referring to the Gospel parable, which treats equally those who are idle not due to their will and those who work. See Mathew 20, 1–16.

²² This new productive-financial asset is strongly felt throughout the territory of Naples.

²³ See P. Bouvier, *Le lien social*, Paris 2005, p. 323.

²⁴ Not as a remedy but a solution.

condition that the latter continued para-noble attitudes and traditions in proclaiming the value of non-physical work²⁵ in order to rise, symbolically and materially, above the mob who are forced daily in the submission to beastly labour.²⁶

The attitude of “for the better or for the worse” is anthropologically inherent in the “Neapolitan man”, however its vice versa consequence of the extreme scarcity of available resources is due to specific historical and political choices and not to natural factors or metaphysical factors. Evidently, this has effects on the socio-cultural context, which in turn is declinable as the root of subsequent, even socially harmful behavior.²⁷

Incidentally, it should be briefly said that before the presence of a strong powerful caste of townsmen,²⁸ made up transversely by all forms of upper middle class *intelligentsia* and Neapolitan professions and characterized by closing elements to those who do not belong to them,²⁹ historically there emerged a sort of “counter-vailing tendency”, in which those who were excluded from power and legal management aimed to counterbalance their disadvantage and draw different channels to fulfill their needs, sometimes even by illegal means.³⁰

Besides, even food aid distributed nationally and supra-nationally, free of charge to those in need, appears to be valuable labour. For the latter, it must be said it is somewhat peculiar as compared to what commonly happens in most cities of the West since this sort of charity work is widely carried out by governmental or supra-governmental³¹ organizations and involves what it can be viewed – in the territory examined – as some sort of “middle class” (protected from the most patently degrading pressures).³² Therefore, these initiatives are not only those carried out by charitable institutions, often with a religious background, and only for the old and the new excluded of the well off metropolis.

Closely connected to labour – although less pressing – is the question of housing, in areas that daily register housing occupation which at least, and through unlawful practices, seem to be initial claims for rights.³³ With respect to this issue, a certain “inaction” of the public entity is denounced.

²⁵ See E. Quadrelli, *Andare ai resti*, Rome 2004, p. 178 ff.

²⁶ In Neapolitan it means “work”.

²⁷ More in M. Pascali, *Camorra, economia e società*, Torino 2012.

²⁸ Similar to other areas in Southern Italy.

²⁹ It must be said that a report of the “caste” is often necessary to aspire to rather limited tasks (such as the work done in hosting cultural festivals in Naples).

³⁰ This vast category included the wide practice of a para-trade union conflict (and here we are referring to organizations of unemployed people who see in public power the contender of their requests) as the Camorra cronyism.

³¹ Firstly, from the European Union, as can be read in the coats of arms printed on each pack containing food aid. What has been stated here is from direct observation.

³² Nevertheless, extremely needed.

³³ In addition to this, trade unions aimed at controlling public services, provided poor public housing. Clearly, occupants who were aided by local criminal organisations were not included.

However, in all these statements there seems to be not only the frequently reported southern victimization, but also benefits impulses and stirrings of hope and redemption.

Let us see in further detail, some short passages taken from the interviews carried out.³⁴

First Interview

Interview with Gennaro C. and Carmine G.

Question: "What do you think of these politicians?"

Carmine: "I have been living in this neighbourhood for about twenty years and I believe politics has done nothing, I think that we who live in this neighbourhood should have more to say. The 1st Art. in the Italian Constitution declares that the State should provide its citizens who have nothing, with work, assistance and financial help. None of this has been applied so we have no rights. There are no choices for the young; I see it daily, I'm a voluntary worker in youth rehabilitation."

Question: "What is the percentage of unemployment in Scampia?"

Carmine: "Well, you can say, it's 100 out of 100, there are no policies for the young, no family policies and I think Scampia is much talked about but actually the situation is just the same as it has always been."

Question: "Gennaro, we recall,³⁵ you are a young man who needed some help in the past and so you met Carmine, Carmine tell us something about yourself."

Gennaro: "I've been living in Scampia for thirty years, in "Sette palazzi".³⁶ In the past I've pushed drugs and done some of the worst things you can ever do in the world, for this I've been sentenced for more than ten years in trust with the social services at the counseling centre *Caritas* in "block g" for a crime I did in 2000. Now, thanks to God, I'm a different person and I always pray to God to be always by my side and never leave me".

Question: "Gennaro, can you tell us how Carmine helped you?"

Gennaro: "He helped me understand that it wasn't sufficient to seem or appear to be another person to say you have really changed but change has to come from within the heart and mind".

Question: "Gennaro what do you think of politicians in Scampia?"

Gennaro: "I hope in a new Scampia, one with culture, work and kids growing up with hope of change."

³⁴ It should be noted that the above is reported faithfully, limiting to transcribe in Italian expressions the form and terms of the Neapolitan dialect.

³⁵ This information was given immediately after recording.

³⁶ The precise building referred to is "sub H" in Via Labriola, located opposite the "Vele".

Second Interview

An interview with Salvatore G. and Rosario held outside the mentioned social center in Scampia.

Question: “Salvatore, tell us how long you have been living here and how would you describe it?”

Salvatore: “I’ve been living in this neighbourhood for thirty years and I think, it has been ruined because there’s nothing.”

Rosario intervenes and says: “It’s the State that gives us nothing.”

Question: “Who would you blame for all the delinquency here?”

Salvatore: “The State is to be blamed because there are no jobs.”

Question: “Please tell us how you get by?”

Salvatore: “I do a bit of everything, welding and selling second hand at the market”.

Question: “Have you ever done anything illegal?”

Salvatore: “Yes”

Question: “Can I ask you what?”

Salvatore: “A bit of everything: drugs, robbery and other such stuff.”

Question: “Why did you do it?”

Salvatore: “For the family, to get by.”

Question: “Have you ever looked for a job?”

Salvatore: “Of course, I fight for work.”

Question: “How?”

Salvatore: “There’s the unemployment movement in Scampia, I’ve been unemployed for many years and I’ve got no income.”

Question: “So how do you get by, then?”

Salvatore: “My brother helps me.”

Question: “What does he do?”

Salvatore: “He’s disabled and gets a disabled pension, and this is how he helps me and my family (my three kids) get by.”

Question: “What would you like to say to our politicians and especially to those at the town hall?”

Salvatore: “To help us, by giving us some jobs.”

At this point **Rosario**, who has lived in this neighbourhood since 1961, affirms he knows the area thoroughly, and suddenly states: “there’s an unemployment range that goes from 85% to 90%”.

Question: “What do you think of the social center?”

Rosario: “It has always been open for us here, and it hosted earthquake victims in 1980.”

Question: “Have you got a job?”

Rosario: “I’ve been out of work for forty years, there aren’t any jobs and we’ve got family. Obviously, it’s a consequence you end up selling drugs, we’ve been abandoned by the State, and then people say: he’s gone to prison.”[It is de-

duced that Rosario has been sentenced to jail in the past] "Why hasn't the government helped me find a job and given me a chance to prove I'm a worthy citizen? It isn't right to simply declare that there is crime in Scampia. There's crime because there's no work, not for the pleasure of being criminals. I've got four children to feed."

Question: "What appeal would you make to our grand politicians?"

Rosario: "You're born a gentleman . . . but Totò and God are the only gentlemen here. Anyway, by trying to give a future and resolving the problem of youth unemployment in this neighbourhood."

Third Interview

A mother living in the blocks of flats *Vele*

Question: "Would you like to tell us about your life?"

Mother: I live in the *Vele* and I lost my son in 2004, he was only 25 years old and his name was Antonio. Antonio was an innocent Camorra victim. Eight years have gone by and we still haven't had compensation. Immediately, we had to counteract the prejudice that murder was part of the logical assumption of an inter-camorra conflict, a widespread prejudice still held today and that goes beyond court room walls, and this has obviously increased our pain. (She sighs: "Ah!" and says: "I feel bad when I talk about my son"). "Antonio was disabled. That day he was out, down at the flats, and had to go out for a pizza with his friends. He didn't reach the pizza restaurant nor did he come back home; due to his disability, he was left alone, unable to run from the shooting. The institutions didn't turn up, absence and absentees, this is something I can't get over, all because this is Scampia. Nothing has been done".

Question: "What do you think about Scampia?"

Mother: "Besides what I've already said, I have to say that there is something else in Scampia, there are many associations and organisations."

Question: "What can you tell us about these associations?"

Mother: "We try to help out by giving what we can, even our moral support".

Question: "Don't you feel bitter about these youngsters who don't have a future in Scampia?"

Mother: "Yes, I do. In fact, speculation on the *Vele* should stop. Scampia is not necessarily Camorra, drugs and death, etcetera; it is also made up of honest people. Still, it is a no man's land because it has been completely abandoned by the institutions. And like other desolate places, it is a victim of reporter jackals waiting for front page scoops about crime. The state is absent and nothing is done to help the young, giving them at least hope of an honest job".

Forth Interview

Interview with Giuseppe G. nicknamed Peppino, a pedlar selling small objects.

Question: “Good morning Peppino. Can I ask you some questions?”

Peppino: “Yes”

Question: “What’s your name and what do you do?”

Peppino: “My name’s Peppino and unfortunately I’m a pedlar because the pension I get is too little”.

Question: “Can you tell us how much you get and what type of pension is it?”

Peppino: “I get 278 euros a month for a hand”.

Question: “ How long have you lived in this neighbourhood?”

Peppino: “I’ve been living in Monte Rosa since 1964. Since I was born, 15th January 1964”.

Question: “ Do you live in a rented house?”

Peppino: “My sister lives in a rented house and I live with her because I can’t manage to pay the expenses on my own”.

Question: “How much do you earn?”

Peppino: “On good days about ten euros a day”.

Fifth Interview

Interview with Carmine, a supporter at the social centre *Gridas*

Question: “Could you tell us how this organization started?”

Carmine: “It was set up as a promoter and administrative center of the homonymous municipal social center as provided by council housing plans in Monte Rosa. This was taken into the custody by the independent housing committee assignees, as in the past (specifically around the ‘80s) there were no official local counselors in the various neighbourhoods, but committee members who were made up of a number of people in the condos. This committee was delegates by the IACP to run all the structures of the centre.³⁷ The building was immediately used for social activities, within the territory of Scampia from 1980. Inside, there is a library, a surgery, a counseling department and various other areas for public use and service. Gradually IACP lost interest and those working there have chosen different fields of interest. On our arrival we did not break any laws as there were still committee assignees who welcomed our interest and assistance. Therefore there are no premises for the charge of illegally occupying or squatting.³⁸ IACP has not taken parts probably as it has intentions to receive compensation at the expense of

³⁷ It should be noted that the complex in which this center is based is made up of several structures, each one with its own management but physically connected to one another in a unified manner.

³⁸ As previously mentioned, there is still an ongoing criminal proceeding against the association *Gridas* and against one of the leaders in the unemployed movement.

others. I would like to point out that we have officially written to IACP's delegates referring that we would financially take charge of the building (its maintenance and re-establishing its original function of opening as a social centre open to the general public). However, we have not had a reply and furthermore the building has not been registered. It is as though it were a ghost or invisible building. It is clearly evident, there is an absence of the Italian state within the municipality of Scampia, the only forms of public intervention are through social charity. This is an unchangeable reality and over time it has and is getting worse. So there is no need for the police to invade drug dealers squares as these just move further down into another area or street corner and in the meantime, street robberies increase. And yet 99% of the people living in Scampia are honest and kind-hearted people who are waiting for a serious change"

Sixth Interview

An interview with a worker at the Town Hall of Naples (The person interviewed wishes not to be named).

Question: "We are in the heart of the social centre in Monte Rosa, do you know anything about the building, its background and history?"

Reply: "I have lived in this area since it was a part of Secondigliano and was named "The Ina Casa district" because in the past, Monte Rosa was not part of Scampia, which did not even exist then, at least not as we know it today. Scampia developed in the 1970s with the 167 Act, which is a national act for council houses and by which these concrete monstrosities were raised. It was only in the 1980s that the precinct of Scampia was absorbed in the eighth municipality in the north of Naples, in which Scampia is part of Piscinola, Marianella and Chiaiano. As regards the building, Monte Rosa 90b, I want to underline that I was brought up in this building. There was a library I used to go to. It had a really important social function, as it gave the younger generations the opportunity to acquire some learning. This was so until the building was totally abandoned by IACP. Fortunately, from the beginnings of the 1980s, first with Gridas and later with various other organizations, the building has been used for social purposes, for example the unemployment movement, which has given it a new life."

Question: "What do you think is the main problem that plagues this neighbourhood?"

Reply: "Scampia, in my view, pays for all the problems concerning the suburbs in which the less fortunate have had to move to. Since the 1970s, this has been the place where proletarians and the lower classes have moved to from the Old Town to be dumped in these enormous built barracks. The problem of unemployment without a serious intervention by the government is destined to grow. Repression won't solve anything; for example, for each person who is arrested by repressive State action will be replaced by another 10 people. This is because the government doesn't go to the heart of the matter, to the roots; this is what I believe

to be the main cause of social deviance and even forms of greater and more serious crime. The aim should be to give alternatives, job opportunities. As far as I am concerned, this is impossible with the actual political scenario. If local politicians have the objective of aiming at personal enrichment – whether directly or indirectly, through money or public relations – it’s obvious, they have no interest to battle for the people’s welfare. It is also true to say that we don’t live under a dictatorial regime as politicians are imposed but we vote them; therefore, to be honest, there are a number of people in Scampia who support these politicians. So, we shouldn’t just blame politicians but it’s our fault too. We should examine our consciousness and say out loud that we did vote for them”.

Seventh Interview

Spontaneous statements personally recorded by Armando.

“As an ex migrant (I’ve lived and worked abroad for about 10 years in the 1990s) I can say that Northern European Countries (Luxemburg, Holland, France, Switzerland, Germany) I have worked in are extremely different from Italy. It’s true that unemployment concerns the whole of Europe and not just Italy; however, the dynamics are different. In Northern Europe, if you are unemployed, the State helps you get by with allowances; instead, in Italy unemployment is disastrous, it kills and hits your pride. To be unemployed in Italy means there are no ways out. In Scampia, obviously, the situation is even more troublesome and problematic due the high rate of people out of work”.

From the evidence collected, Naples seems to be like many other cities in the world, it is not a city made up of “wedges”, but a “mosaic”, where each stone fragment³⁹ has its peculiarities. Those amazing diverse colours are just as various worlds, however different and inhomogeneous, among which is Scampia, a homogeneous neighbourhood (with no way out nor promising prospects). Above all, it is and is felt as a “black stone”. It has been left to survive on its own with its unemployment, abandoned by institutions, and its welfare is only aided through charity, that has become expected and the norm.

³⁹ Naples is a metropolis with “numerous cities laid side by side and separated only by a road. Yet they have different customs, traditions, social and economic conditions. It is an extremely varied territory; from towns nestled at the foot and around the Vesuvius to the neighboring areas of the city [...]. In the same city, in a single district (or “merged municipalities”), there are different realities: Posillipo is not Chiaia and Chiaia is not the Vomero; living in Via Toledo is not the same thing as living in the Spanish Quarter, even if they are only two steps away” (see C. Sepe, *Non rubate la speranza*, Milan 2008, p. 122. The above is an adapted translation of the original quote).