

VALLMELAINA

Defining identity in the spaces between

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INTRODUCTION

The neighborhood is often a jumping off point when speaking of identity or place of origin. People commonly speak of their homes by making reference to their neighborhood. This neighborhood, however, rarely has definite boundaries and more often than not cannot solely be spatially defined. Instead, one's neighborhood is dictated by the presence of community in it and its constant evolution as people, ideas, and economics constantly flow across its borders.

Similarly, Aldo Rossi (1982) proposes in *The Architecture of the City* that the city cannot be reduced to a single basic explanation. Rossi claims that in fact it is the sum of many parts, of quarters and districts that are highly diverse and differentiated

in their sociological and formal characteristics. Each of these parts constitutes a 'moment' of formation, a product of the geographic, social, and economic forces at work in the larger urban context. Each of these moments come together to form the urban continuity we define as the city. By studying one of its parts it is not only possible to learn about that particular quarter, but also about the history and forces guiding the city's development as a whole.

This neighborhood study is an attempt at doing just that. It is conducted as a means to gain a better understanding of the entire city of Rome via a detailed analysis of one of its *quartieri*. This word, closely related but not synonymous with the English idea of neighborhood or French concept of *quartier*, suggests a working class residential area

that has evolved with the city rather than being superimposed upon by, for example, zoning (Rossi, 1982). Using this ever evolving *quartiere* as our laboratory we not only hope to gain an intimate understanding of the daily life, spatial, and historical context of the people that live within its boundaries, but also that of the greater city in which we find ourselves resident outsiders.

THEME

As we conducted our street surveys and interviewed residents, we collectively came to the conclusion that our quartiere, Val Melaina, as a neighborhood is undergoing an important transition. Once a community on the fringe, both politically and geographically, it now gives the impression of a thruway at first glance. For many it is a place that people

pass through on their way to newer developments farther out in the periphery of Rome.

Val Melaina is subject to multiple forces pulling and straining its once prominent identity as an anti-fascist hotspot fueled by a tightly knit community. The construction of the Centro Commerciale Porta di Roma has shifted social and economic gravity north of the neighborhood. Meanwhile, the recent extension of the

Metropolitana B1 line into the area allows new groups to access Val Melaina and permits its native residents to diffuse throughout the city. In the face of these external forces social capital wanes as the original population ages and the younger generation fails to assume the civic interest of their predecessors. The neighborhood would appear to be losing its "imageability" in the Lynchian sense of leaving a vivid mental impression upon

the casual observer. Instead it is trending toward just another one of the many transitory and somewhat indistinguishable spaces that characterize the periphery of Rome.

However, this transition is not occurring passively. Several institutions within the neighborhood are actively struggling to revive the civic culture and identity that once defined Val Melaina. Fortunately, strongholds such

as the Comitato di Quartiere, the Parrocchia Ss. Redentore a Val Melaina, the Biblioteca Comunale, and the market are succeeding in various degrees in maintaining this identity. Our report will document this transition, analyzing the factors currently weakening the neighborhood's identity while investigating the institutions and citizen groups enabling its maintenance and resurgence.

Piazza Val Melaina present day
Source: Andrew Jungkuntz



METHODOLOGY

Determining the study area

The team was initially provided a butterfly shaped study area based on census tracts bounded by 7 major roads seen on the study area map to the right. The main housing projects, market and Piazza di ValMelaina emerged as the central and most important components of the neighborhood. However, additional neighborhood visits offered increased awareness and understanding leading to continuous redefinition of the study area. Feedback from our preliminary findings determined that the surrounding areas needed to be studied in greater detail to situate the context of Val Melaina's economic and social components. A distinction between the primary and secondary area was defined out of this need.

Collecting Data through Street Surveys

Street surveys and a photo grid analysis were used to collect qualitative and quantitative data on Val Melaina. Topics were grouped together and

researchers individually made observations, moving street by street. Topics included building appearance, street typology, maintenance levels, green space, presence of people, land use, vacancies, and businesses.

To determine the building typology we noted building appearance including facade, fixtures and maintenance. Buildings were then grouped by physical appearance. This, however, was not an accurate characterization of typology so it was subsequently reevaluated using more defined typologies based on architecture and



Marissa surveying building typology
Source: Shanika Hettige

function. One such is a palazzone. Determining land use was a more straightforward process. Due to a large quantity of mixed use buildings, they have been further classified as Mixed Commercial and Mixed Residential where Mixed Commercial consists of a higher concentration of commercial units in a building and Mixed Residential, a higher concentration of residential units. A construction category was also needed due to the significant proportion of the metro construction relative to the study area.

Street typologies were determined



Preliminary Building Typology map
Source: Shanika Hettige

by observing the number of lanes, presence of pedestrian and motor traffic, maintenance of streets and sidewalks, quantity of automobile and motorini parking, as well as access to public transportation and types of shopfronts. We classified the streets as either having a commercial or residential focus and then further divided them into primary or secondary arteries.

Maps & Graphics

The land use, building typology, and street typology maps were made in AutoCAD, based on a base map image from Google Maps. Statistical charts and graphs were created in Microsoft Excel and Adobe Illustrator.

Citizen Interviews

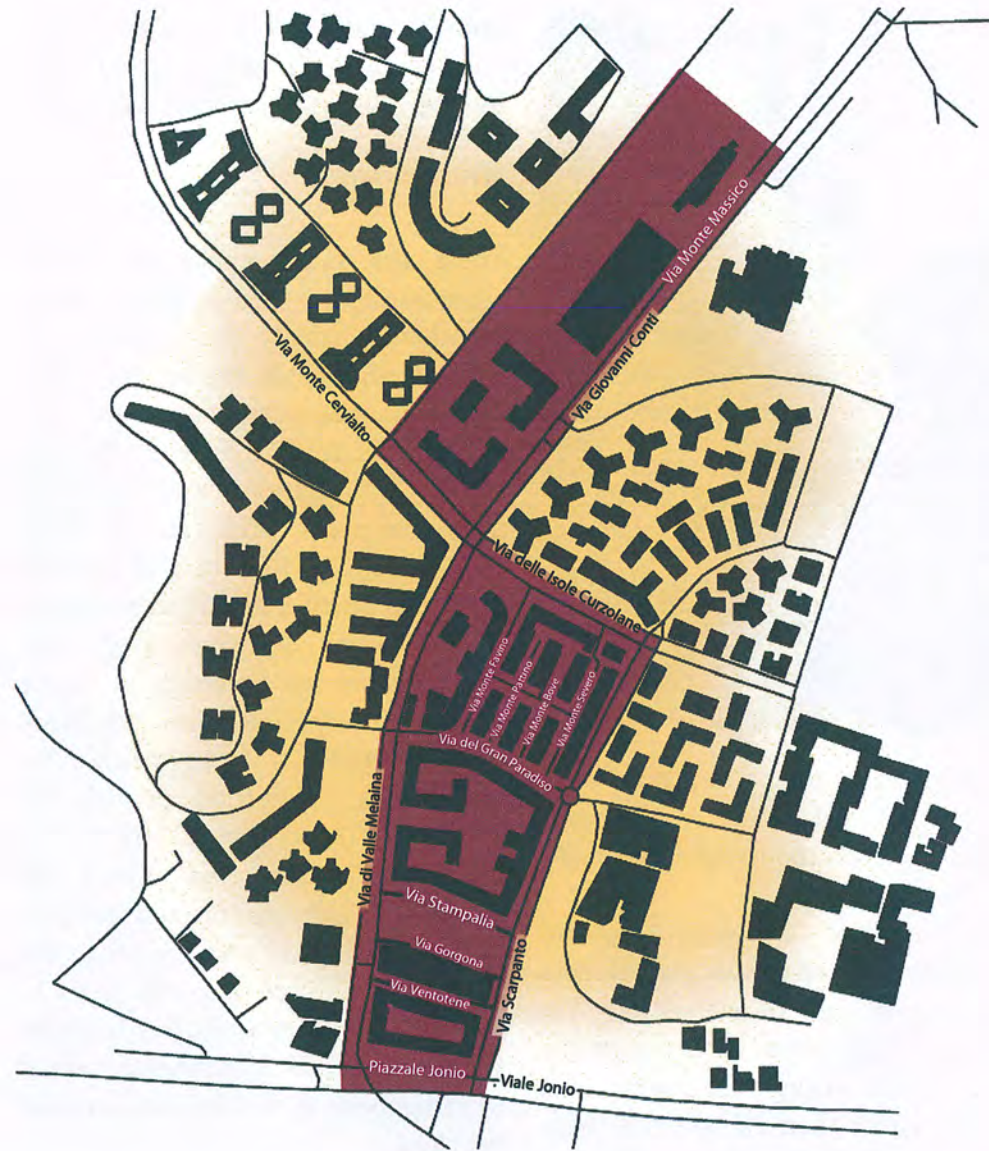
We conducted 25 interviews ranging from casual street interviews to formal interviews with targeted informants. Street interviews represent a convenient survey of residents based on our limited time spent in the neighborhood and varied willingness of residents to speak with us. Both types of interviews were carried out in Italian by a professor or teaching assistant. The information was then relayed back to the team in English.

We used seven general interview questions to guide our casual street surveys (see appendix), and more specific questions for our formal interviews. Three formal interviews were conducted. The first with Arianna and Loreina, President and Vice President of the Comitato di Quartiere di Val Melaina, the second with Padre Gaetano of Parrocchia Ss Renditore a Val Melaina, and the third with Marisa, director of the Biblioteca Comunale Ennio Flaiano. These interviews provided a wealth of information because they drew our attention to organizations we were previously unaware of, such as Caritas Cafeteria and Palestra Popolare Velario.

Lynch Map Collection

These community hubs were mentioned as a result of the cognitive mapping component of the interviews. During our interview process we often asked residents to draw a Lynch map of their neighborhood. Developed by Kevin Lynch in his book *Image of the City*, from 1960, the maps consist of five elements:

- Paths - means of movement such as streets or transit lines



Edges - Boundaries both physical such as walls and symbolic borders
 Districts - Sections of city one can be inside or outside of

Nodes - Important points or junctions such as piazzas
 Landmarks - External points of reference and orientation.

By identifying key elements of their neighborhood, people show how they relate and perceive the space. This gives insight into their unique experience in an area. For our project, Lynch maps were collected from both street interviews and members of the Comitato. People were given a blank sheet of paper, pen and asked to draw places that were important to the neighborhood and them, such as where they lived, worked, and shopped. We found that many citizens were hesitant to draw maps at first. In this case an interviewer would begin the map by drawing where we were currently located and continue by asking questions such as where the interview generally spends their time and where exactly that is located. What often happened was this would ease participants into drawing and they would take the pen and draw themselves.

Demographic and other Statistical Data

Demographic statistics were obtained from the Istituto Nazionale di Statistica (ISTAT). Unfortunately, the most recent data accessible for this project is from the 2001 census. We compared statistics

on unemployment, age, and home ownership among other things to gain a sense of how Val Melaina compares to the rest of Rome.

Business Statistics

The recently created Agency of Land Revenue (Agenzia Territorio) provides appraisals and real estate market information for each municipality. We compared market values in the Val Melaina/Tufello municipality with the six surrounding regions for geographic context. The presence or lack of a market reaction to the Porta di Roma Mall and B1 metro line frame the conversation about whether Val Melaina is gentrifying. The Agency's Val Melaina/Tufello municipality incorporates the poor area adjacent to but included in our primary study area; low real estate values there may have reduced our municipio's average values. We also compared the 2011 and 2012 data to see what price changes occurred to figure out the direction and magnitude of real estate trends.

We paid special attention to the Porta di Roma mall and Mercato Coperto Val Melaina using interviews, fieldwork, and the mall's investor summary as resources. We analyzed the characteristics of these two major



regional shopping centers with overlapping catchment areas with special focus on their respective push-pull factors.

The business typology section illustrates regional competitiveness with an economic base analysis. We surveyed businesses in the primary study area using fieldwork and Google Earth then categorized them into sixteen groups according to economic sector. We also considered their competitiveness on a local, regional, and global scale. The goal is to understand what Val Melaina

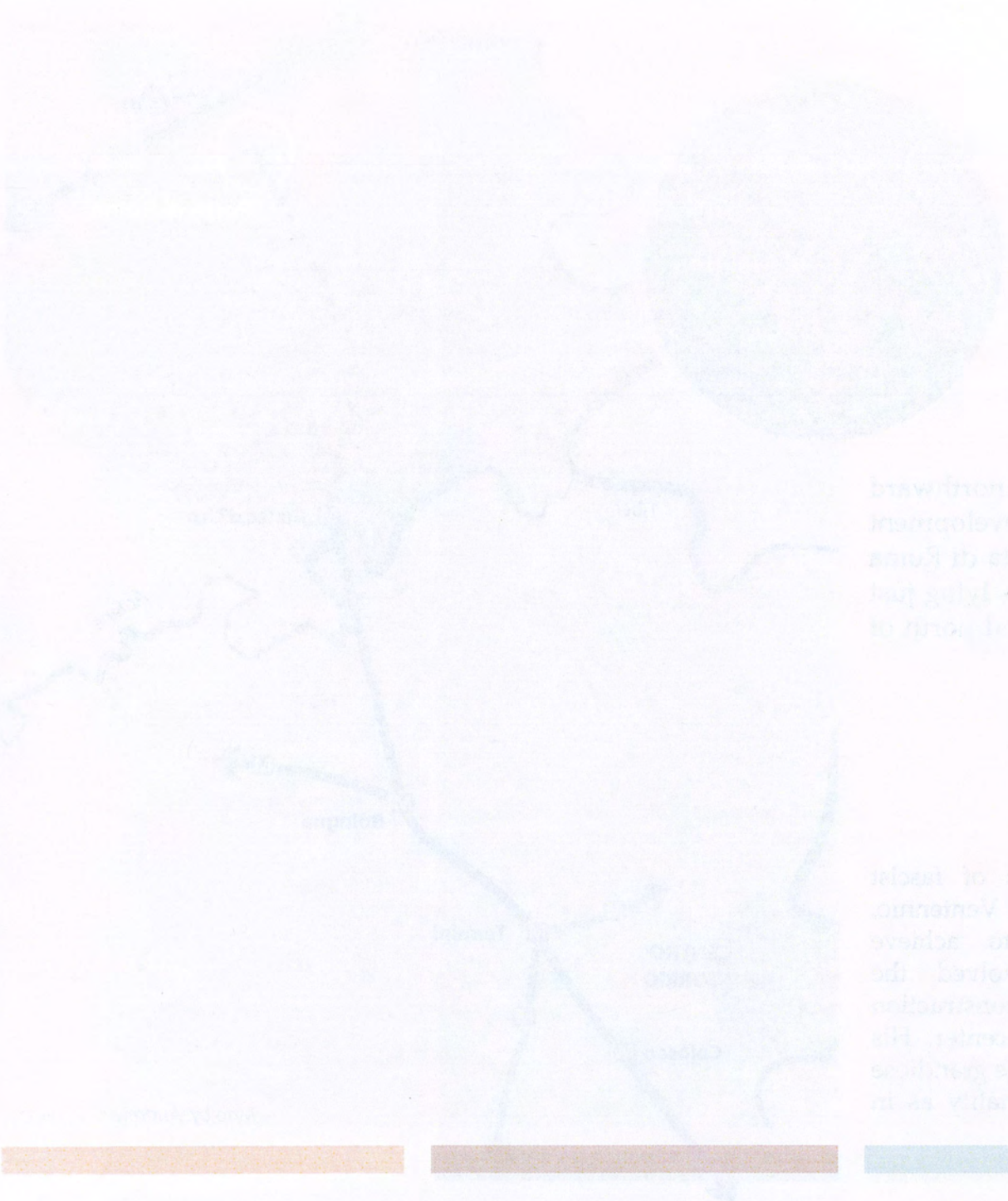
imports and exports. We integrated business analysis with street typology to determine local commercial hubs.

Shortcomings

There are many challenges which arose during the project that are worth mentioning. Firstly, it is important to acknowledge that each group member's own personal perspective and bias have influenced the lens through which information was gathered and analyzed. This is especially significant given that the area in study is in a country and language largely unfamiliar to the researchers. The language barrier presented a major challenge, especially in capturing nuanced ideas. It is impossible for translations to be 100% precise, but we tried to portray all interviews accurately in order to respect the integrity of information and voice of those interviewed. Additionally, the greatest amount of time was spent in our study area on weekdays between 10am-3pm, yielding a limited look at what happens in Val Melaina around the clock.

There is little literature or documented history of Val Melaina. This made discerning what was true information very difficult, especially when

receiving varying and contradictory information. Additionally, ISTAT statistics from 2001 are not ideal as they provided an outdated look at information.



extend the road in the northward
 to the site for development
 surrounding the Port of Boston
 Center, connecting the two
 parts of the CRA and part of
 the harbor.

HISTORIC

During the 50 years of travel
 history known as the Victorian
 era, Boston's streets to achieve
 a certain city involved the
 development of transportation
 at the time in city center. The
 goal was to show the same pattern
 of travel and movement as in

the beginning
 of the city. The city's history
 is a story of growth and
 change. It is a story of
 progress and innovation.
 The city's history is a story
 of the people who have
 lived and worked here.
 It is a story of the city's
 past and its future.
 The city's history is a story
 of the city's people and
 their lives. It is a story of
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CONTEXT

GEOGRAPHIC

Val Melaina is a neighborhood located in the northern periphery of Rome, just south of the GRA, and east of the Tiber River and north of the River Aniene. Politically speaking it comprises one of the many neighborhoods of Municipio IV which extends past the GRA and into the Agro-Romano. It's immediate neighbors are the communities of Montesacro to the east and Tufello and Talenti to the north. Numerous bus lines connect it to the center and rest of the city. The Metropolitana B1 line will soon connect the neighborhood to cities Metro network with the opening of the Jonio stop. The current closest stop is Conca D'oro. The official plan is to

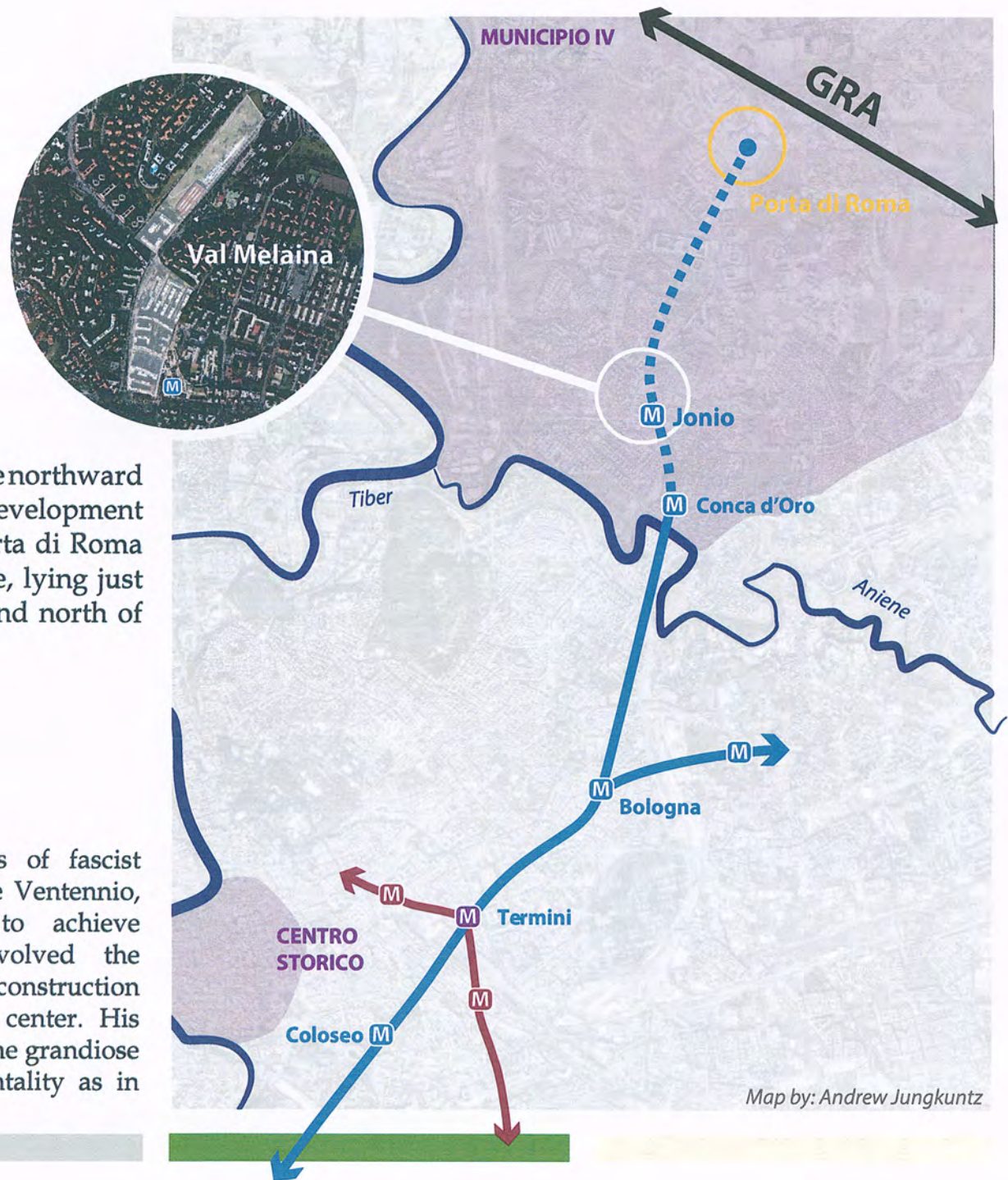
10 context

extend this metro line northward to the more recent development surrounding the Porta di Roma Centro Commerciale, lying just south of the GRA and north of Val Melaina.

HISTORIC

The Beginnings

During the 20 years of fascist regime, known as the Ventennio, Mussolini's vision to achieve a modern city involved the demolition and reconstruction of the historic city center. His desire to show the same grandiose power and monumentality as in



ancient imperial Rome resulted in the displacement of the urban underclass that inhabited this center. Between 1924 and 1937, twelve official neighborhoods, called borgate were created far out in Rome's periphery for the newly displaced people. One of these borgate was Val Melaina. The area was initially undeveloped farmland. Along what is now Via Prati Fiscali, two rival shanty towns, or baracche, known as Pecchino and Shanghai housed several families. Val Melaina's initial population was composed mostly of lower class citizens transferred

from other public housing projects or those displaced from centro storico or the demolition of these two barrache.

Between 1930 and 1932 the first public housing project of Val Melaina (referred to in this report as palazzone) was constructed by the Instituta Fascista Autonoma delle Case Popolare (IFACP). The palazzone was built in the middle of undeveloped countryside, the product of developer speculation on inexpensive rural land and recent advancements in building and road construction that lead

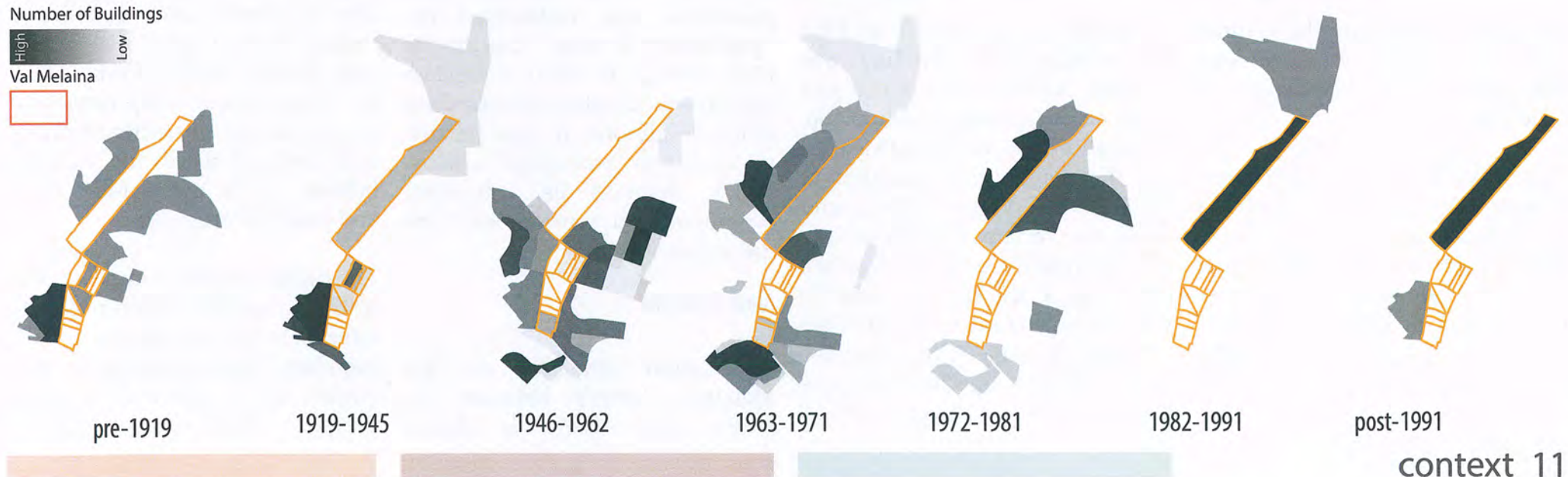
to lower capital costs. Guglielmo Ceroni, a journalist in the 1940's "remarked that the housing project was built so quickly it seemed to arise suddenly out of nowhere, providing the governor with the impossible task of providing essential services to 3,000 residents." He returned 10 years later and said that conditions had not improved. Val Melaina "had remained a place born under unhappy auspices in the middle of the plains and meadows" (Villani, 2012).

Being located far from the center

was a huge burden for residents, who suffered immensely from increased transportation costs, poor road maintenance, and lack of adequate sanitation and heating systems, among other things. Human waste and rainwater were not properly drained which resulted in the formation of a large swampland south of the palazzone where Piazza Val Melaina now stands. Although citizens petitioned for the construction of a sufficient drainage system, in 1940 the only sewer in the area was still that of neighboring Montesacro. It was over capacitated and

Figure 1: Density of Historical Development by Census Tract

Source: ISTAT 2001





Public Housing in Val Melaina late 1940's

Source: archiviofoto.unita.it

incapable of handling the volume of water required of it. The area often flooded to the dismay of residents

Via di Valle Melaina, Via Gran Paradiso, Via Scarpanto, and Via Stampalia remained incomplete for several years. By 1936, the first half of Via di Valle Melaina was built, part of Via Scarpanto, and half of Gran Paradiso. Via Stampalia and other important streets were still completely missing.

A request by the IFACP in 1936 to continue street building was rejected. Schools were scarce and faced an overabundant school age population, not only in Val Melaina but the neighboring quarters of Prati Fiscali, Vigne Nuove, and Bufalotta. Perhaps the only service the community enjoyed was the extension of the 207 bus line by the Azienda Tranvie Autobus del Governo di Roma (ATAG) into the area. This bus line however was poorly utilized as the cost, at 0.50

lire per ride, was too expensive for most residents.

The original occupants of the apartments represented a wide swath of workers such as clergymen, grocers, masons, tailors, railroad workers, ushers at the Palace of justice, polygraph workers, and city clerks (Villani, 2012). This hints at an interesting social environment where the previously homeless people all of a sudden cohabitated with the members of the working class. All experienced a degraded quality of life: distance from the center and location of work, forced cohabitation, overcrowding, and lack of essential services. The palazzone was nicknamed the "proletarian fortress" due to the high volume of urban underclass forced to endure these substandard living conditions. It later became referred to as "Stalingrad", a name which channels its anti-fascist sentiment and tension with the government.

Neo Realism

Information obtained on Val Melaina's history between the 1940's and 1980's is drawn

from interviews and indirect sources, such as the films from the Neorealist movement. One film in particular that captures the environment of Val Melaina in the 1940's is *Bicycles Thieves*. Filmed in 1948, the film illustrates the physical surroundings, as well as societal struggles of Val Melaina and similar areas during the post WWII era. The plot revolves around the search of a bicycle which the main character, a poor father, relies on to do his job. Started in 1945, Neorealism, "revealed the truth about humble people that the mainstream industries had suppressed" (Klawans, 2009). Before the recent collapse of Fascism, many of the films generated were propaganda tools full of concepts that would over shadow reality (Vesia, 2005). In Neorealism, nonprofessional actors, realistic character conflicts, and unstaged places for shooting helped convey the real-life social and political struggles.

The public housing complex north of the palazzone, which residents refer to as the case nuove or case popolare, built around 1945, was chosen as the location to shoot *Bicycle Thieves*, considering

that those living there had experienced the simple troubles of finding employment and surviving (Wagstaff, 2008). The distance between the peripheral neighborhood and the city centre coupled with limited transportation options for the working class is a struggle that defines the film. During the late 1940's Val Melaina was finally undergoing more urban development, but the rural presence made integration quite difficult. Seen as an 'urban desert', Val Melaina still lacked important amenities such as running water and paved roads that it had been missing since the 1930's.

By showcasing the working class in such conditions, Neorealist films developed a strong bond to the Communist movement during the Fascist era (Klawans, 2009). Money from communist ties would fund the Neorealist movies in an effort to disseminate the truth about the working class struggle to the rest of Italy. The movement was gradually suppressed over the course of the Ventennio, but despite this anti-fascist and communist sentiments still ran high in Val Melaina.

During WWII

During WWII, Nazi Germany occupied the quartiere. It was bombed twice by the Americans, once on July 19th, 1943 and a second time on August 10th. The first bomb struck the center of the palazzone courtyard, fortunately harming no one. The second damaged one of the case nuove on Via Monte Pattino. October 27, 1943 saw the round up of more than 1,000 people by the German Schutzstaffel, or Secret Police (SS). 346 people were detained, and deported to forced labor camps. Four prominent anti fascists, Rizio Fantini, Fillippo Rocchi, Antonio Pistonesi, Renzo Piasco were sentenced to death. A plaque on the walls of Via Scarpanto, dedicated in 1954, celebrates the "self-sacrifice" of these four heroes. These stories of partisan struggle gave the residents a sense of common identity that has defined the neighborhood until recent years.

Post WWII

During the 1950's economic prosperity and tourism increased

within Rome's center. This prosperity did not spill over to help the working class in the peripheries, heightening the disparity between the bustling urban center and areas like Val Melaina. A booming population, southern migration, uneven socioeconomic statuses, and a public spending oriented government prevented Italy's 'economic miracle' of consumerism and capitalism from reaching Rome's peripheries (Vesia, 2005).

Italy's boom eventually slowed down in the mid 1960's, during the control of the Christian Democratic-Socialist alliance (Fraser et. al, 1988). Economic and social hardships, a baby boom and a political regime unpopular amongst the masses created a breeding grounds for illegal and informal activities. According to Padre Gaetano of Parrocchia SS Redentore a Val Melaina, the neighborhood was already subject to mafia corruption and shantytown construction throughout the 1930 until the 1960's. The 1970's marked the beginning of a significant drug market that proliferated throughout Val Melaina. The interviews with the



Father and son in *Bicycle Thieves* (1948)

Source: miol.it

priest of Parrocchia Redentore and the manager of Biblioteca Ennio Flaiano gave much insight on the effect of this on the neighborhood, especially its impact on the area's youth.

The church developed health services and drug control organizations for the youth in the 1960s to combat the problems of drug use. The library, inadvertently joined the fray when it opened its doors in the 1990's. Space in the library was designed to be a safe haven and creative environment where neighborhood kids could gather instead of working and negotiating with drug dealers. This conflicted with the interests of the criminal leaders, who led a campaign of vandalism against the library. However, as the library improved its facilities--air conditioning to battle the summer heat--and programming--free buffets in the evening--it attracted certain groups, especially the elderly, that warded off the criminals.

Present Day

Today the public housing

complexes of Val Melaina stand among a completely developed urban fabric. The streets are complete, running water reaches the houses, sewers exist as do other modern urban amenities. However, most of the residents we interviewed still complain that the city does not adequately look after the neighborhood. Lack of elevators in the public housing projects are a problem for the increasingly elderly residents who inhabit them. The problem of appropriate stormwater drainage persists, leading to flooding in Piazza Val Melaina and the surrounding buildings. Road maintenance is a sore topic and police vigilance and service is below comfortable levels. The Parks Department does not look after the few green spaces in the neighborhood. People generally still feel abandoned by the government.

Wagstaff cited that as late as 1947 Val Melaina was still seen "as a sort of waste-countryside," but now the "city was expanding to meet it". From our observations it appears that the city has not only finally met Val Melaina, but absorbed it and left it behind as

development continued its march northward toward the GRA. It now experiences a different kind of neglect than it did because of its initial geographic isolation from the city, the kind of neglect that comes from becoming just another piece of Rome's homogenized urban periphery.

DEMOGRAPHIC

A total of 3260 people lived within Val Melaina in 2001 according to the available census data. The population was composed of 1437 families with an average of 2.3 people per family. This is slightly lower than the Roman average of 2.45 people per family. The ratio of males to females living in Val was extremely similar to that of the greater city of Rome. There is a slightly greater percentage of women than men in both cases (see appendix). For the most part, age distribution patterns in Val Melaina also follow those of Rome, with the exception of a more dominant

aging population. There are fewer children and adolescents as compared to people ages 25 - 45 and 60 and above. The only discrepancy between Val Melaina and Rome is that Val Melaina has a much greater percentage of residents (11%) above age 74. (see figure 2.)

Unemployment in Rome in 2001 was fairly high at 8%. Val Melaina, however, had an unemployment rate at an even higher level of 12% (figure 3). Similar to the overall gender distribution trends of the general population, the breakdown for males and females in the labour force is more or less the same in Val Melaina and Rome. However in contrast to the gender statistics of both areas, men dominate the workforce and make up approximately 60% of workers. The largest portion of the Val Melaina and Rome residents who do not contribute to the labour force are retirees (approximately 40%). This statistic is closely followed

by homemakers at roughly 30%. The smallest portion of residents who do not participate in the labour force are students, who make up approximately 15% (see appendix). These statistics follow the age distribution patterns of Val Melaina, emphasizing the high number of elderly people and lower number of adolescents.

A survey of educational achievement in Val Melaina reveals that most students drop out after middle school. Barely a quarter of the population attends high school and only 7% attend

university. These are well below the Rome wide averages of 32% and 14% respectively (see figure 5). This low level of educational attainment, combined with the home ownership levels hints at the generally low socio-economic status of the residents. Nearly two thirds of residents in Val Melaina rent their homes while one third own them. This is the inverse of the Rome wide pattern. Interviews conducted with residents back up this conclusion, which is also consistent with our historic analysis. In this sense the neighborhood has not changed



Figure 3: Unemployment
Source: ISTAT 2001

much over time and if it does not not justify, it at least validates the stigma as a lower income level quartiere.

It is interesting to note the gender discrepancy within the neighborhoods' workforce and educational achievement. While men outnumber women in the workforce, the women

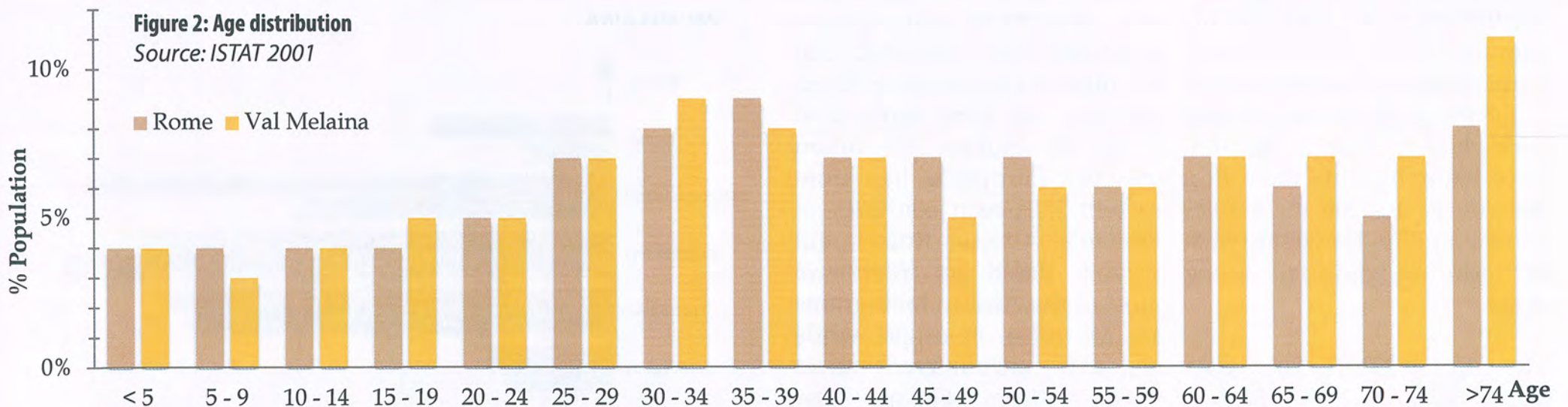
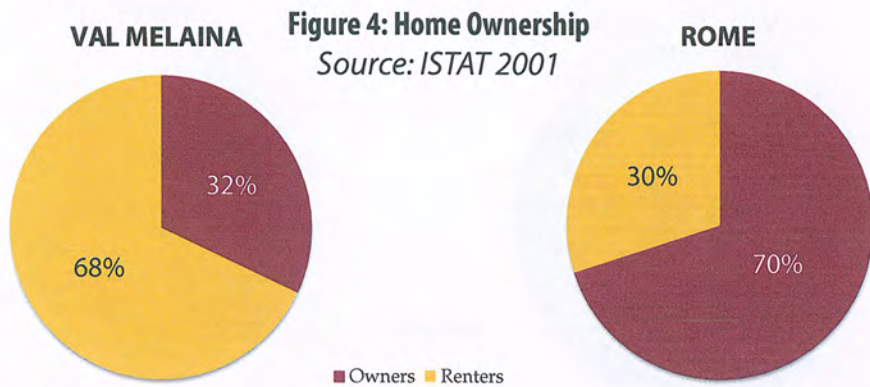


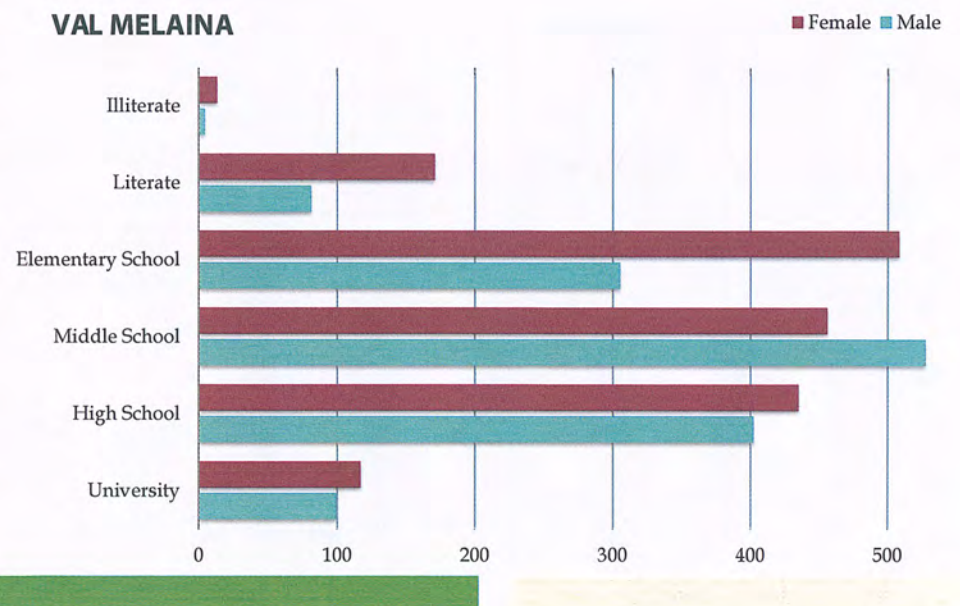
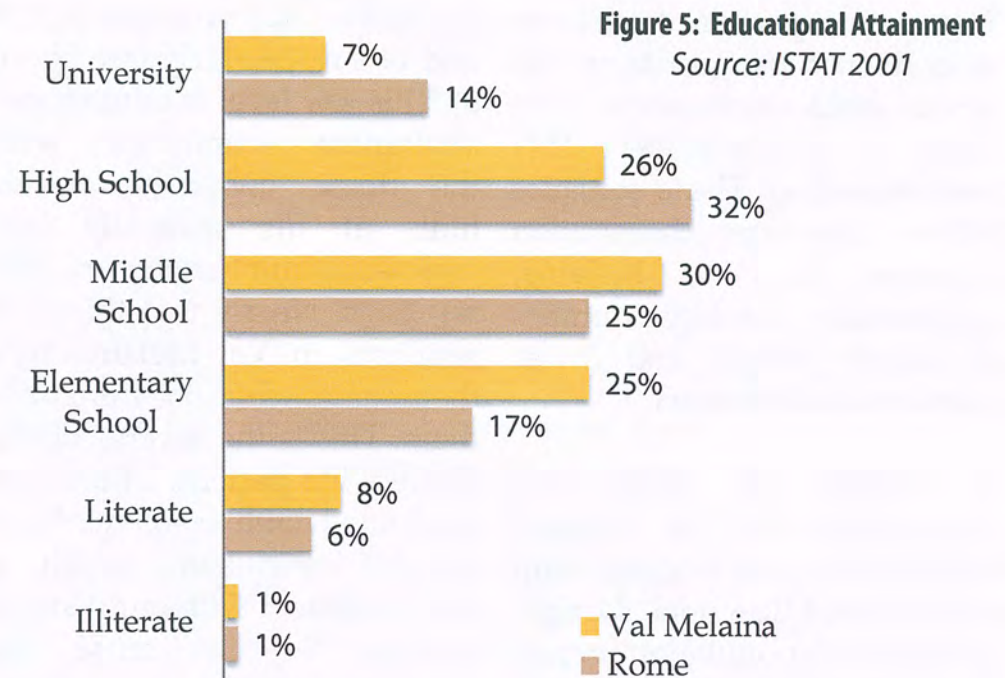
Figure 2: Age distribution
Source: ISTAT 2001



consistently outperform the men in terms of higher educational achievement. We also more often than not observed women in the leadership roles of the neighborhood; the president of the market, the president and vice-president of the Comitato di Quartiere, the matrons who unofficially patrol and clean the courtyards of the palazzone. Perhaps this higher educational achievement by women coupled with a lack of outlet in the labor force naturally puts them in a position to assume these roles of community leadership that the team has witnessed during visits.

The official ISTAT 2001 data

residents (see figure 6) only comprise 2% of the population of Val Melaina. 70% of these are evenly divided into Asian or other European origins, while the remaining 30% are evenly divided between African or stateless residents, commonly referred to as Romani. From our observations and informal interviews we concluded that the highest proportion of Asian residents are from Bangladesh while the highest proportion of other Europeans hail from eastern European countries of Romania, Albania, Russia, and Poland. Based on interviews most of the African immigrants are Moroccan in origin, while we also encountered street vendors from Ghana. The

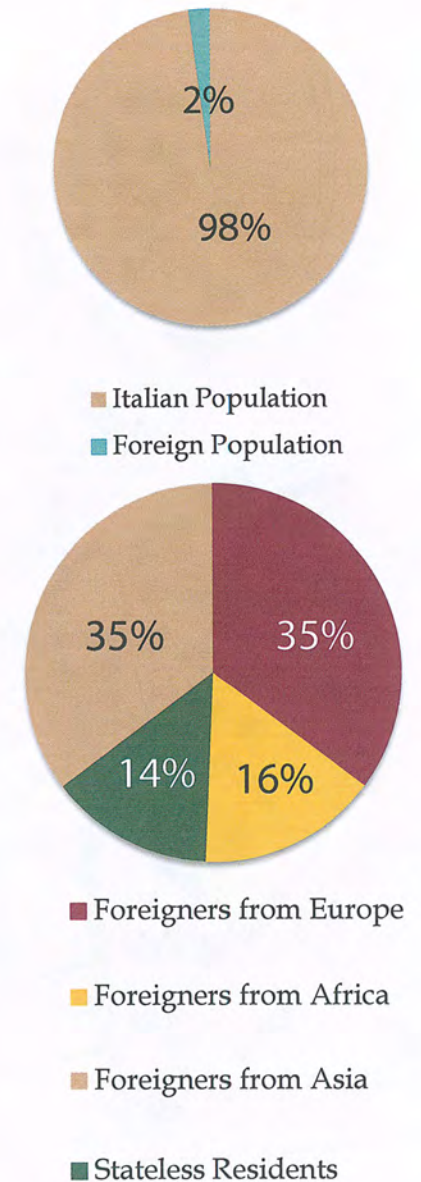


statistical data on immigrants is largely incomplete as it is hard to capture this demographic in official methods due to their sometimes uncertain legal status. From our interviews and observations it would seem that the proportion of immigrants living in the neighborhood is much higher than 2%. While some of our interview sources indicated that many of the immigrants seen in the neighborhood live in other areas and are drawn to the area during the day to utilize services such as the Caritas Soup Kitchen and public library. This could also account for our skewed perception of the number of immigrants who live in the area.

From this brief statistical analysis we glean several important facts about the neighborhood. Val Melaina is aging, it suffers from greater than average levels of unemployment, its residents are mostly renters, and educational attainment is low. Immigrants are common to the neighborhood and they often

appears as street vendors or patrons of the public services. Overall this paints a picture of an economically depressed area with little momentum for future improvement. In drawing this very general conclusion it is important that more recent statistics from the 2010 census are needed to confirm that this is still an accurate depiction of Val Melaina. However, from our numerous interviews that cited the same problems over and over again it is not unreasonable to say that this is a fair representation of the area.

Figure 6: Foreign population in Val Melaina
Source: ISTAT 2001



ANALYSIS



LAND USE

Mixed commercial and mixed residential constitute the majority land uses in the neighborhood of Val Melaina. Few spaces are dedicated to solely commercial purposes except for the market in the north of the neighborhood.

This is typical of the surrounding area as well, placing Val Melaina in a high density residential zone on the periphery of Rome consistent with its historical development. Little green or open space is found within the neighborhood besides the inner courtyards of the palazzone.

The same goes for public space, and where it does exist for example in the small courtyards of along Monte Bove and Monte Severo or in Piazza Val Melaina,

it seems to be underutilized. Farther north towards the Agro Romano patches of open space still remain in between leapfrog residential and commercial development. This area is a testament to the historical growth of this area and clue to what the area of Val Melaina might have looked like in its earlier stages of growth.

In general Val Melaina lacks dynamic collective gathering spaces accessible to the public. Between Via Stampalia and Via Gorgona, Piazza Val Melaina seems like it would house a vibrant display of public space, however this is not the case. The Piazza consists of a series of concrete planters and benches. There is also a playground with some broken equipment. On weekday mornings children with babysitters or grandparents are typically found playing, other residents walk through with dogs. As the day progresses people can be seen collecting in the piazza. Individuals sit on the ledges

Legend

Commercial	Public Space
Mixed Commercial	Green Space
Mixed Residential	Institutional
Residential	Construction

of planters. The majority of people are elderly, often a small group will gather in the back of the piazza deeply engaged in conversation. The piazza is also used as a cut-through by some, to get from one side of the street to the other.

A woman who runs a parrucchiere indicates in an interview that there is problem with homeless people with drug and alcohol addictions who hangout in the piazza. Previously, the market was held within the piazza, but in 2001 it moved down Via Giovanni Conti to an enclosed structure. President of the Market, Signora Franca, comments in an interview that the reason for this was due to hygiene issues because of drug users at night. Another contributing factor was that the Comune decided to create underground parking in the piazza during the Giubileo. The underground parking construction blocked some shops causing businesses to be negatively affected.

Many community members do not refer to the piazza by name or recognize it as a gathering space. Others, such as the fruit vendor on Via Gorgona, outright decry it as a failed space. Youth do not use it often to hang out after school, congregating at the Porta di Roma in their free time instead.

Piazza Val Melaina contrasts with the Palazzone in terms of both green space and public space. The interior of the Palazzone encompasses a shared courtyard. The space consists of a variety of plants including shrubs, trees and groundcovers. There is less trash than that found in the piazza and it is well taken care of. A small household wastebasket is sometimes placed next to benches demonstrating a sense of ownership over the space. There is a cooperative spirit as people join together to maintain the space. The spirit is further shown when people walk through the space smiling and greeting

each other. Contrastingly, the Case Popolare have a series of pedestrian paths and smaller courtyard spaces. The green space is not as expansive in amount volume or variety nor is the presence of people as high. One resident shares his opinion that there is not a great sense of community, he does not know all his neighbors and people seldom interact.

The courtyard of the Palazzone speaks to the interesting relationship of public and private space in Val Melaina. Although the space is not technically private or gated off it does not give the appearance or being completely public. As a semi-private space it contrasts directly with the completely private 1994 housing on Via Monte Cervialto. This distinction is clearly illustrated by the the building's fence along the main entrance. A sign outside the buzzer indicates it is cooperative housing, yet people passing throughout the gate are largely indifferent to this.

One man told group members that although the building is cooperative housing it does not function as such.

Additionally, many people accumulate on the ledge of five large grass planters on the corner of Via Monte Cerviallo and Via di Monte Massico. Along Piazzale Jonio people sit on a combination of public benches and private restaurant seating echoing the dynamic of intermixing of public and private seen throughout the neighborhood. These informal public spaces are the most successful in Val Melaina despite their proximity to traffic and other disturbances.

BUILDING TYPOLOGY

The primary and secondary study areas of Val Melaina contain a variety of high density residential building typologies, consistent with the area's historical development as a place of intense resettlement. Mixed residential is the dominant building use, and many of the palazzine, high density apartment blocks, and even some pieces of the palazzone contain bustling streetside storefronts. The typology for private housing is often high density buildings with a private courtyard. Locked gates and well maintained buildings

usually signify exclusion and private residency. Public housing in the primary areas is less exclusive, but the placement of buildings and entrances enclose public space. In secondary areas, differences between public and private housing are sometimes hard to distinguish. Clustered, tall buildings are often seen along main commercial streets, and are usually public buildings. Much of the private housing is isolated by elevated geography and greenery and were generally shorter buildings.

Legend

- | | |
|--|---|
|  High Density Block |  Tower |
|  Stecca |  Palazzone |
|  Free Standing Commercial |  Case in Linea |
|  Plateatico Attrezzato |  Community |
|  Palazzi | |



Generally Public Residential Typologies



Case in linea

At least two attached buildings of identical dimensions often around 7 stories. Sometimes they are clustered to form L-shapes.



Stecca

Multiple adjoining Case in Linea. They form long straight or occasionally curved lines of buildings.



Palazzone

High density residential apartment buildings with public courtyard.

Generally Private Residential Typologies



High density block

Gated, not accessible to public. Exclusive courtyard either protected by gate or by the physical complex/building



Palazzi

Later development, similar to Case in Linea. Multi-storey private apartment buildings. Mixed use private parking and public space.

Ambiguous Residential Typology



Tower

Tall, square-like structure which hold one apartment per floor. Typically 8 or more stores and generally with balcony

Non-Residential typologies



Community

Buildings used for civic or public gathering such as schools, day cares, churches and the Bocefila club



Free standing commercial

Free standing commercial enterprises such as strip malls and banks.



Plateatico attrezzato

Covered pavillion used for market purposes



Commercial artery

Multiple lanes, bordered by high density of businesses, high traffic intensity. Streets and sidewalks are wide and paved in asphalt. Medians planted with trees. High maintenance interrupted with construction.



Residential artery

Multiple lanes, bordered by high density residential buildings, high traffic intensity. Streets and sidewalks are wide and paved in asphalt. Medians contain trees and additional parking spaces.



Secondary commercial

Single-lane, bordered by mixed use development with businesses on first floor, low-medium traffic intensity. Maintenance and upkeep is lower than arterial streets with notable presence of garbage especially along Via Ventonene.



Secondary residential

Single-lane, bordered by residential units, low-medium traffic intensity. Sidewalks are narrower and overparking by automobiles and motorini is frequent.



Pedestrian

Paths in courtyards of palazzone housing project, and along the pedestrian only streets of Vie Monte Bove and Severo. Green space is high. Street length varies from narrow to high and may be paved in asphalt or brick pavers.

Legend

- Commercial Artery
- Secondary Commercial
- Residential Artery
- Secondary Residential
- Pedestrian
- Buildings



CONNECTIVITY

Street Typology

Val Melaina is generally divided up into streets with either a residential or commercial focus varying in intensity of use. A majority of streets are designated as residential, in accordance with prominent building typologies and land uses. Many of the secondary residential roads appear to be accessed predominantly by residents and workers in Val Melaina and therefore function more often as a parking lot than a transportation channel. Despite this, the neighborhood is well connected to the rest of Rome via heavy bus routes on Via di Valle Melaina. When taken solely in the context of the neighborhood, this street serves as the main commercial artery; however when looked at from a larger scale, it serves as a thruway connecting Val Melaina north towards the

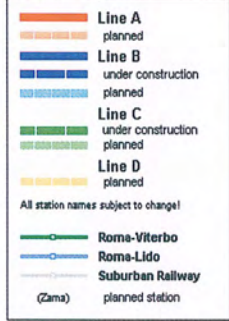
Porta di Roma Mall and the GRA. The commercial arteries of Via di Valle Melaina and Piazzale Jonio experience much lower vacancy rates than the secondary commercial streets in the southern parts of the study area (see appendix). These major roads are characterized not only by islands of Umbrella pines, but also by the presence of light dining, auto and maintenance stores, clothing shops, and finance, investment, and real estate firms. The concentration of retail units on Via di Valle Melaina and Piazzale Jonio exemplifies the outside forces which guide development towards the needs of the greater city of Rome as a whole rather than the needs of Val Melaina.

Metropolitana construction

In 2008, Rome started to undergo a city-wide metro

transformation that would affect many peripheral areas, including Val Melaina. Each of the three existing metro lines will be extended, in addition to a separate new metro line that will go from Agricoltura to Ojetti. The first line undergoing reconstruction is the B1 addition from the Bologna station. The B1 metro project was excavated by two contractors SELI and JV Salini Costruttori - Tecnimont, who were awarded the job from Roma Metropolitane (Thomas, 2010). The train line extends north from Bologna's station and will eventually end in Bufalotta GRA (urbanrail.net). The most recently completed station is Conca d'Oro, located to the south of Val Melaina and construction of the Jonio stop is currently taking place along Via Scarpanto and at the intersection of Via delle Isole Curzolane and Via di Monte Massico.

ROMA Metro



2012 © UrbanRail.Net (R. Schwand)



Metro Construction in Val Melaina centers around the Ionio Stop.



Metro construction in Val Melaina degrades the physical environment and buildings that many call home. Excavating beneath Val Melaina and the other places along the route is a difficult task considering that the geological makeup of the ground is structurally poor (Tunneltalk, 2009). The mixture of weak soil and heavy underground vibrations takes a toll on the resident complexes, as a growing amount of homes cannot close their windows, experience crumbling ledges, and have sudden uneven flooring (valmelaina.it). The overspilling of yellow construction walls into the streets and building materials on public grounds causes difficulty for citizens navigating the neighborhood or trying to find parking. Construction's overwhelming presence does no good for businesses either. Several interviews mentioned that the obstruction caused several businesses bordering Piazza Val Melaina to close down. Although the construction site

is temporary, the lasting effects and uncertainty of the station's impact are of concern.

Despite physical degradation attributed to current construction, some locals remain optimistic about the impact of a new station. A majority of interviewees acknowledge the potential benefits that may arise from the metro line. Most mention that with easier transportation, people will have better access to employment opportunities, a dire need considering the unemployment levels of the neighborhood. Others look forward to the increased clientele the line might bring to local businesses, which have been experiencing high turnover and closure rates since the installation of the Porta di Roma Galleria Commerciale. While the metro might increase access to employment and boost sales, it's equally possible that it could redirect flows of people towards the more regionally competitive Porta di Roma development, bypassing any

benefit for the the quartiere all together. Ultimately, the metro's effect on the community will depend on the way Val Melaina develops a separate service niche to compete with the mall's. Ideally this niche would revolve in some way around the quartiere's strong cultural institutions which provide unique services that can't be replaced by those offered in a mall.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

To determine the economic vitality of Val Melaina, the team analyzed the neighborhood's place in the local real estate market, taking into account various business sectors. This analysis was then compared to the offerings of the Porta di Roma mall in order to determine the impact of the development.

Real Estate

The value of residential buildings in Val Melaina are on the rise, much as they are in neighboring Prati Fiscali to the west. The metro development likely contributes to this increase due to the value associated with increased transportation connectivity. Residents over the age of 74 occupy 11% of the housing, creating the possibility for a major hit to the market in the next decade. It is possible that when this happens, the

comparatively low prices will drive young couples to enter the housing market. Interviewed employees of a local real estate office indicate they have already observed this phenomenon. Further, rising real estate values and a large demographic change are indicative beginnings to gentrification. However, it is too soon to accurately classify this process as gentrification as the majority of the historic lower class residents remain in place.

Although residential prices are rising, low cost housing values are decreasing. Specifically from 2011 to 2012 low cost housing became less expensive at a rate of -2.6% (see Figure 7). Low cost housing is minimally less expensive (-14%) than residential housing while public sector housing (see appendix) - which run as low as \$150 euro/month - provides for lower income residents. This extremely well protected sector is not subject to market rates with rents remaining artificially low since apartments are handed down through the

generations or exchanged on the black market.

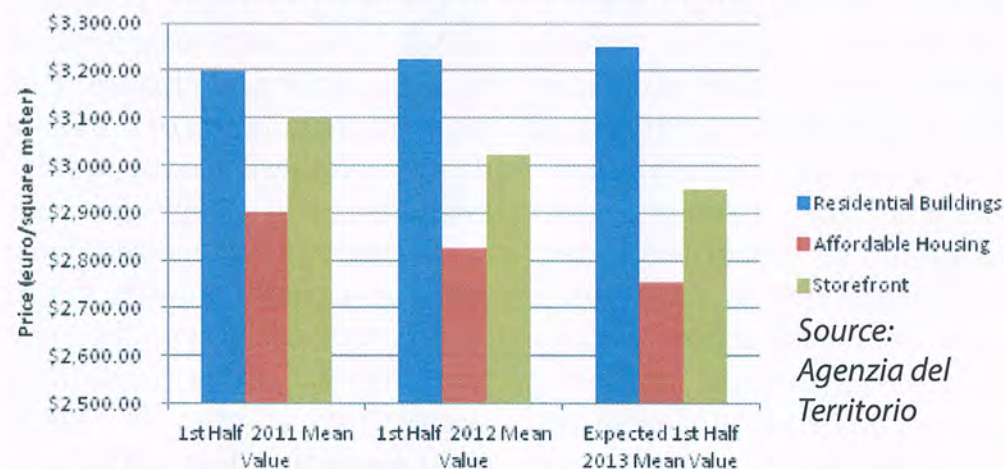
The owner of the street-wear shop on Viale Tirreno, discussed a new type of competition that is changing the character of the market. The "Chinese mafia" as he calls them are increasingly buying up real estate. He first encountered this in 2012, when he tried to expand his store into a nearby property but the "Chinese mafia" repeatedly outbid him by paying a thirty percent premium in cash. The owner describes a tactic as buying the first floor commercial space and then the residential

space above it. Besides frequent sitings of graffiti expressing anti-Chinese statements we did not encounter any other verifications of this "mafia" presence.

Business analysis

Light dining, service, retail, home-improvement, home dining, and clothing comprise the most prevalent business types in Val Melaina. However vacant storefronts are most common, at 28%. This number might be skewed by the time of day we were in the neighborhood. We estimate that a 15% closure rate may be

Figure 8: Val Melaina Real Estate Over Time



Source:
Agenzia del
Territorio

more accurate. On secondary commercial streets, vacancy rates reach 65%. However, on main commercial arteries (such as Via di Valle Melaina) this value is only at 4%. Vacancies may be attributed both to the general economic crisis lessening domestic demand and competition from Portia di Roma. Some of the businesses might have closed during the recession but in the time since then the opening of the mall has worsened problems. This is a sentiment justified by numerous interviews of residents and store-owners.

Effect of Porta di Roma & Mercato

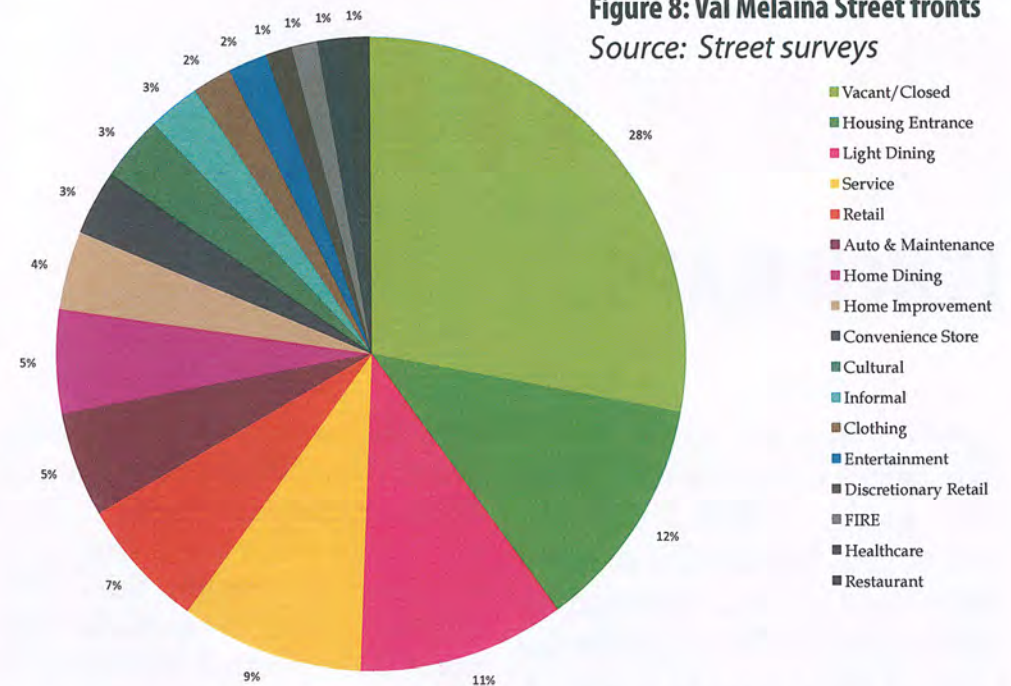
Portia Di Roma opened in 2007. It is the second largest mall in Italy and attracts over 13 million visitors annually (portadiroma.com, 2013). The establishment's catchment area includes Val Melaina and the rest of Rome. Local businesses in the same economic sector as the anchor tenants will thus have difficulty competing. Only a counted 17 of Val Melaina's

147 businesses have a global reach, while almost every store in the mall is a large corporate chain. Val Melaina's retail, clothing, entertainment, home improvement, and home dining focused stores are particularly vulnerable because the goods they provide are also offered by stores like H&M and IKEA at the mall. Businesses in the service sector are less vulnerable to the retail-focused mall and should not have difficulty with its presence. In fact these sectors have the most to gain from the new higher income residents. Sectors like light dining and convenience stores will continue to perform well especially along the primary commercial arteries, due to their dependence on foot-traffic. The convenience of being able to quickly get something on foot possesses a sting advantage over commuting to the mall.

The Mercato of Val Melaina market provides a counter point to the mall because it fulfills a dual function as a commercial and social area that is accessible

to everyone in the community. People using the market may be immigrants or native Italians, from high and low-income classes. The increasing presence of immigrants provides cheap labor at the market and also ensures the low income population will have access to fresh food. In contrast, the mall caters to global capital but is only accessible to the higher economic strata. The market's precarious legal status complicates its role in the

Figure 8: Val Melaina Street fronts
Source: Street surveys



neighborhood as the commune has not paid rent to the private property owners. An additional issue concerning the market is the ongoing increased number of supermarkets such as PAM opening on Viale Jonio and Auchan at Porta di Roma. Despite all this, Val Melaina's market helps to maintain the neighborhood's identity and strengthen the local social capital while Porta di Roma reshapes and degrades it.

IDENTITY

LYNCH MAPS

Lynch maps are made up of five main components. These are paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks and the definitions of each, as stated by Kevin Lynch (*The Image of the City*, 47-48), are listed below. A description of the most common way the citizens interpreted these components follows.

Paths

The most commonly found paths on the various Lynch Maps were streets such as Via Isole Cruzolane, Via Val Melaina, Via Scarpanto, Via Monte Favina, and Via dei Prati Fiscali. A majority of the frequently drawn streets are characterized by commercial activity and high density of automobile parking. All

the streets were drawn in the same straight line fashion and formed square/rectangular grids. Even the curved roads were illustrated by compiled straight lines with different angles. Very rarely were roads differentiated according to width. Length variation, however, varied by the monumental importance the street had to that particular resident.

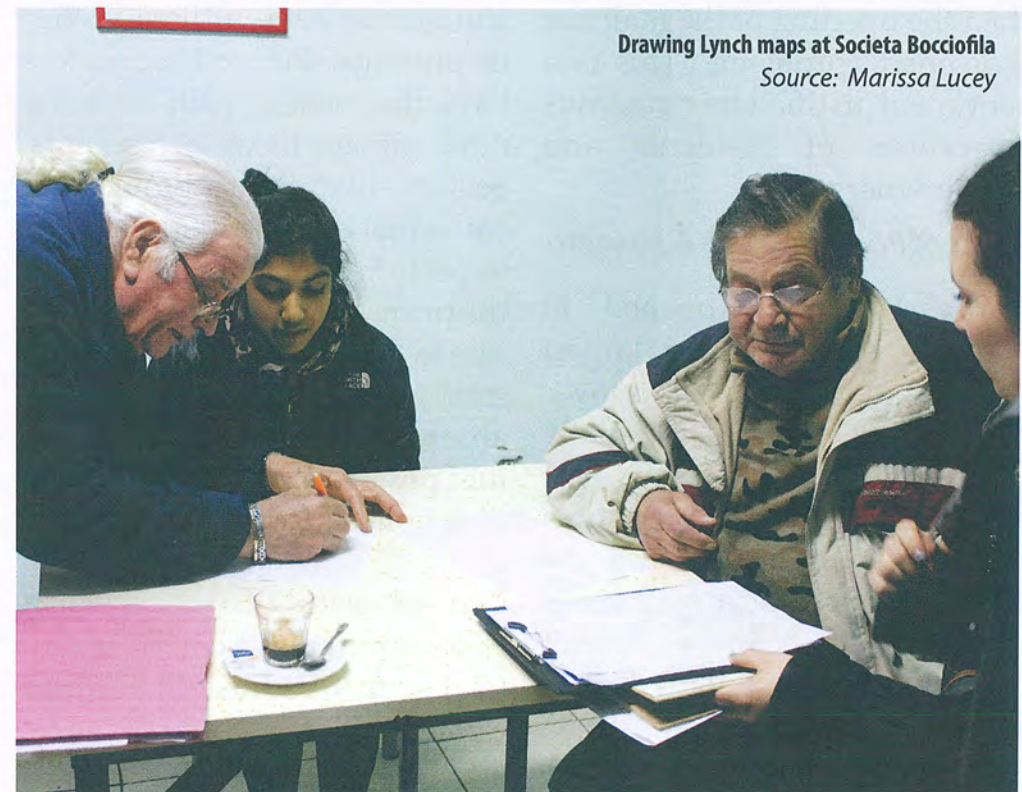
Edges

Interviewees generally used streets buildings to define edges. Simple, single lines are the borders that separate block from street. Enclosed squares and rectangles signify buildings (whether it be residential or commercial), and when clustered, represent a complex, such as public housing.

Piazza boundaries were often represented by a circle that encompassed the piazza's name. Participants used the whole surface of the paper to draw the map, and utilized the ends of the rectangle sheet as the edge ending for their map. No distinct boundary for the quartiere of Val Melaina was ever drawn.

Districts

In terms of districts, Val Melaina is often contextualized with reference to the neighboring quartieri of Tufello or Conca d'Oro. Recognition was shown by either a label or an arrow that pointed in the direction of these neighborhoods. Since most maps were drawn as a close up of a certain part of Val Melaina, rather than Val Melaina in context of the



Drawing Lynch maps at Societa Bocciofila

Source: Marissa Lucey

surrounding area, these kinds of references were rarely included.

Nodes

The intersection at Piazzale Ionio is a commonly found node highlighted by a number of people. Some nodes were more specific to those drawing the Lynch map. An example of this would be the Bocciofila. Places where participants often visited were included in their maps, creating a bias. Piazzas were a common image on maps, however were specifically labelled depending on where they passed by most often, walk across, etc.

Landmarks

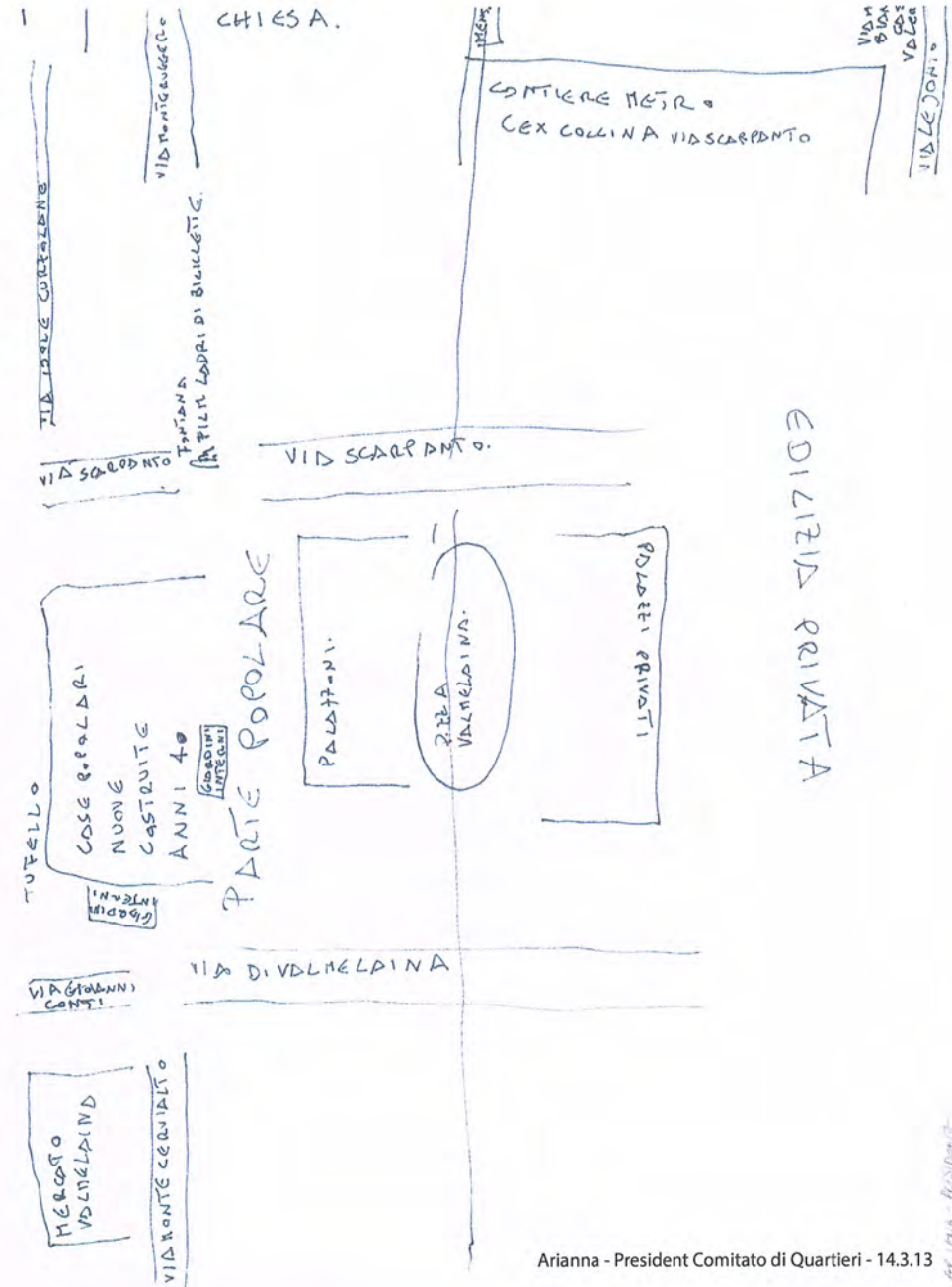
The mercato serves as a landmark for many people as it is a reference point on the northern edge of the neighborhood. For other people it can be considered a node, or hub, as it is a place of work and interaction. The church, Parrocchia Ss Redentore, was also a common landmark. Points of reference were primarily buildings that served a specific function. Individual housing units

or apartment buildings generally went undrawn except for the main palazzone housing project which sometime served as a point of orientation. The actual drawing of each of these landmarks included no distinguishable detail besides their label. Most took the form of a standard rectangle.

Conclusions

Besides specific differences in individual maps, a larger theme can be observed when looking at the maps collectively. The timespan that each participant spends in Val Melaina correlates to the detail and accuracy of the maps. One of the most detailed maps came from the President of the Comitato, Arianna. She has a close relationship with the neighborhood both living in the Casa Nuova and working in the Comitato.

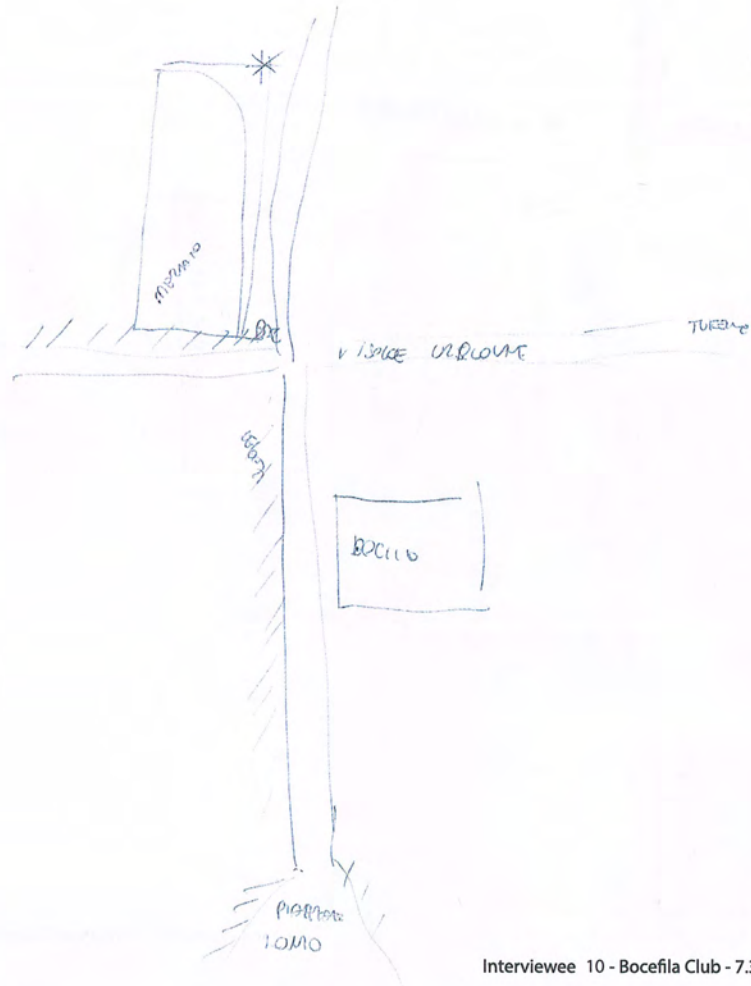
The first thing Arianna drew on her map was the Piazza. Although she drew it as a circle, which it is not, this is noteworthy as it indicates the importance she places on the Piazza within the neighborhood. As President of the



Arianna - President Comitato di Quartieri - 14.3.13

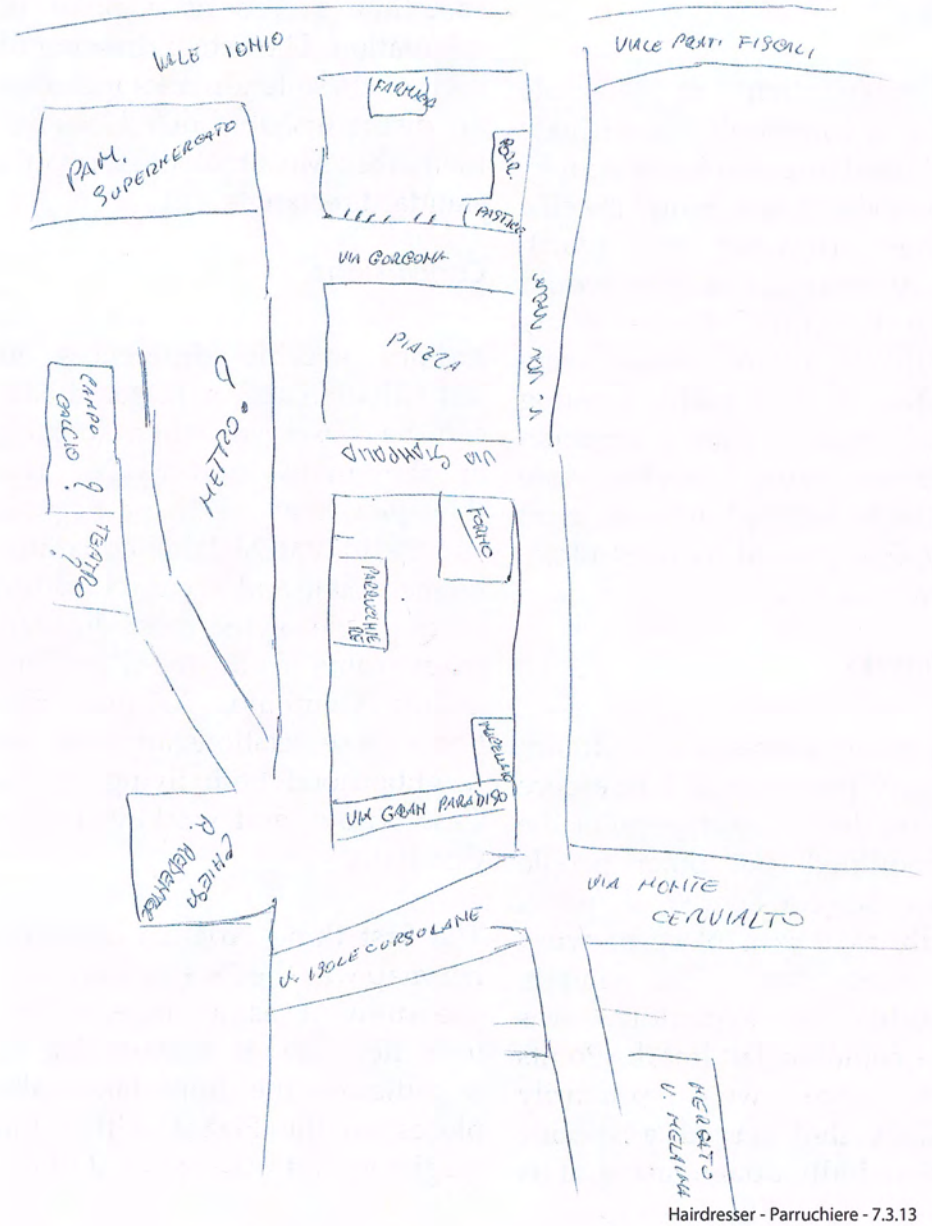
AR. MA - 14/3/13

MAN THAT
DELIVERS
CHEESE



Interviewee 10 - Bocefila Club - 7.3.13

M.C.
DONALD



Hairdresser - Parruchiere - 7.3.13

Comitato, she participates in many events surrounding the Piazza and recognizes its significance in form, function, and identity within Val Melaina.

The owner of the Parruchiere is another example of someone who perceives Val Melaina in more detail. She included numerous elements on her map including things in current question such as the metro construction, and no longer functioning soccer field and theater. She grew up and still currently lives in the Palazzone.

Contrastingly, the man who delivers cheese expressed more hesitance in drawing. While he has lived there since 2000, this makes him a newer resident compared to those who have lived there for a lifetime. His map can be used as an example the second group of people as people who were more recent or just pass through would not draw maps at all. He did not identify as many services or places as Arianna or the hairdresser suggesting the divided between community members. Long time inhabitants and those closely involved in preserving the identity

of the neighborhood can more closely relay details of Val Melaina in the present as they have a closer link to its history.

CIVIC INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Over the course of interviewing residents and asking them to draw Lynch maps, we learned of several services that we were not aware of during our initial visits to the neighborhood. These services represent a side of the Val Melaina community that is interested in building the social capital necessary to maintain its historic identity in the face of the forces pulling on it in the 21st century. The Comitato di Quartiere, the Biblioteca Comunale, the Market and the Parrocchia in particular play strong leadership roles in this initiative by connecting other organizations such as the schools, Caritas soup kitchen, Palestra Popolare, and youth organizations into a framework that fosters a palpable feeling of civic culture within Val Melaina.

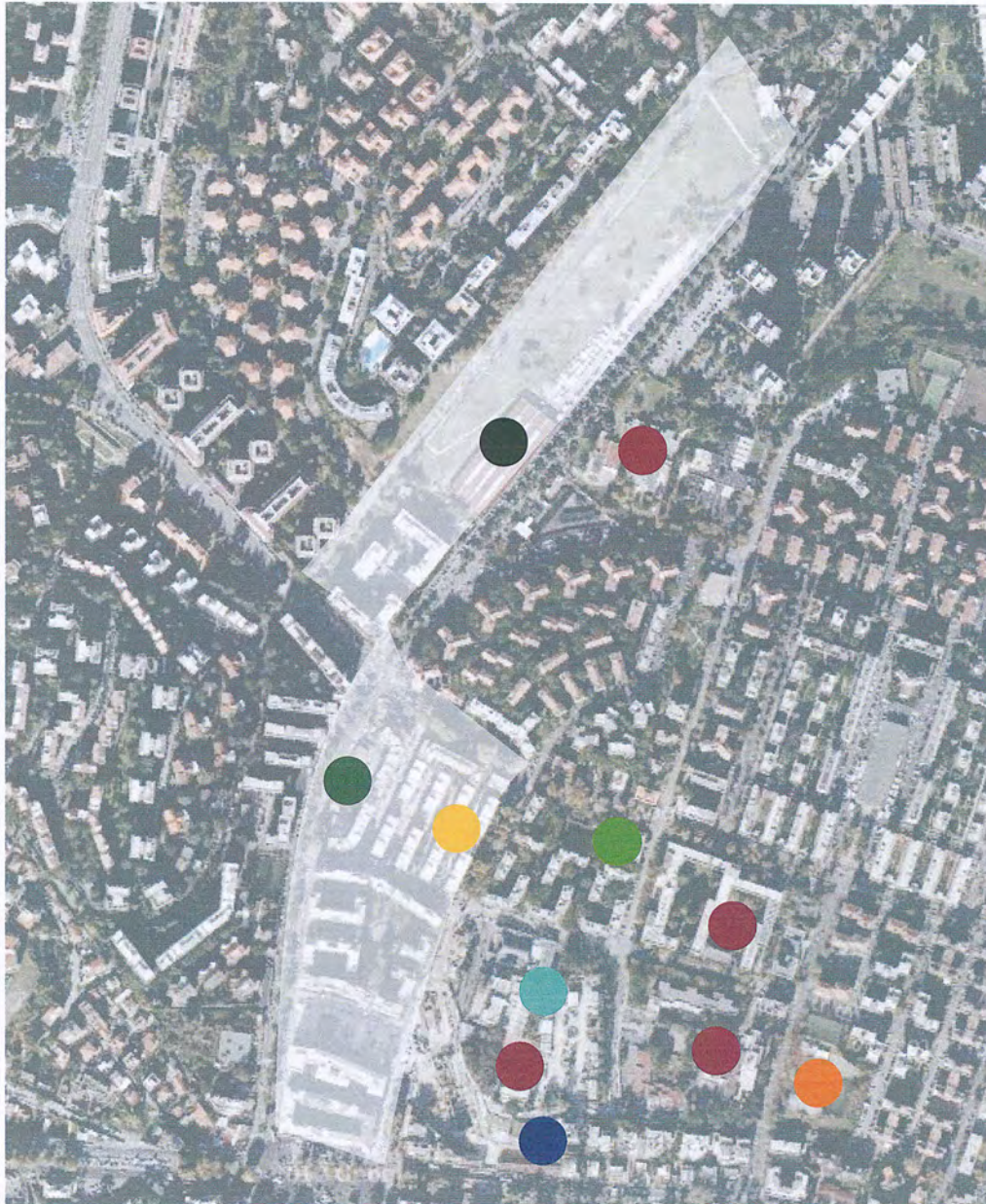
Comitato di Quartiere







Founded in 2010, the Comitato di Quartiere is based out of Vice President Lorena's apartment in the Case Nuove public housing project. Under the direction of Lorena, and President, Arianna, the Comitato carries out a wide range of activities, scoping from organizing photo exhibits that commemorate the neighborhood's history to representing the community's needs and complaints to the Municipio. In 2012 The Comitato organized a successful movement to stop the Comune from building the next B1 Metro stop in the location of the market. This has caused the Comune to take the quartiere more seriously. Arianna and Lorena said that the Comune is now open to consulting the community before planning

development in the area. Currently the Comitato is advocating for the incorporation of the community's ideas into the design of the Jonio metro stop. Among their requests are a green roof for the station and construction of an interactive sensory garden to be enjoyed by the disabled residents of the community.

The Comitato maintains a strong relationship with several other institutions in the neighborhood. For example, they developed a tight bind with the Market organization who has offered them a regular place to meet in thanks for organizing the movement to stop its displacement in 2012. The Comitato also shares a relationship with the Palestra Popolare Valerio Verbano, with whom it organizes fundraising efforts. These funds go

MAP OF ORGANIZATIONS



-  Schools
-  Carità
-  Mercato
-  Palestra Popolare
-  Comitato di Quartiere
-  Società Bocciofila
-  Biblioteca Comunale Ennio Flaiano
-  Parrocchia Ss. Redentore a Val Melaina

to improving handicap accessibility within the neighborhood and organizing different parties and cultural events to preserve a sense of community in Val Melaina. These events are particularly targeted towards youth, who increasingly are pulled away from the neighborhood by the Porta di Roma mall. It is Arianna and Lorena's hope to revive a sense of neighborhood pride in the youth, whom they feel currently lack the kind of civic interest necessary to keep the neighborhood alive.

At the core of the Comitato's mission is the emphasis to correct the physical deterioration, social deterioration, and impaired accessibility that affect the neighborhood in light of historic neglect by the government and recent influences, such as the Mall, that are straining the communities social structure.

Biblioteca Comunale Ennio Flaiano

The library was founded 10 years ago and helped combat the drug criminality plaguing Val Melaina by creating an alternative and

welcoming place for social groups, that included the youth of elderly populations, to gather. Immigrant users started appearing about 8 years ago within an influx of eastern European care workers drawn to the area to look after the aging population.

It offers a range of services to these groups varying greatly from the standard book checkout. The library serves as a public space where people come to play chess, read, or study for university. It hosts a Medioteca with unlimited internet access for 5 euro/year. This service is particularly popular among immigrant users who need to contact family back home but are unable to afford the standard internet subscription. The library contains an extensive collection of books and services for blind, autistic, or otherwise learning impaired children, which is a resource that draws users within and outside the immediate area.

In addition, the library frequently hosts cultural programming. The organization focuses on film, owing to the namesake of the library, Ennio Flaiano, a famous local

screenwriter who collaborated with Fellini. They often try to link this cultural programming to immigrant groups present in the neighborhood in order to incorporate these residents and develop mutual understanding between them and their Italian counterparts.

Through its programming, the library successfully unites several institutions in the neighborhood. First and foremost it hosts orientations with all the area schools to encourage continued reading and exposure to culture even if the kids drop out after middle school. In addition, workshops for teachers on how to teach students with learning disabilities are held to promote education preparation. The library also provides a safe public space for immigrants to use after receiving meals from Caritas, establishing an indirect connection between the two organizations. Last, but by no means least important, the library's Medioteca is home to an Incontra Giovani information desk that can refer youth to jobs and other activities based on their interests. The database of non-profits and community organizations that

Incontra Giovani maintains inadvertently connects the library to other civic institutions and makes it a hub of social capital for the neighborhood.

According to Marisa, the director, the library has increasingly become a landmark of the community since its inception 10 years ago. It is a new focal point of community interaction in the same way that the communist party headquarters was in the neighborhood's early history.

Parrocchia Ss. Redentore a Val Melaina

The church, Parrocchia Ss Redentore, was often included in the lynch maps. The familiarity developed from not only from the church's physical presence, but it's involvement and history with Val Melaina's community. Most of the interaction is fostered by church organizations and services. The interview with Padre Gaetano provided insight on the relationship between the church and locals.

The church is one of 12 different parishes within the area. In 1935, the land was donated for religious purposes by the diocese Roman Agency for the Preservation of Faith. From 1935 to 1977 all activities took place on the adjacent hill until the current church was inaugurated in 1977. A variety of activities have and continue to take place on the hill behind the church. There used to be a youth center that the pastor ran and Padre Gaetano stated that youth groups still meet at the hill. Infant, adolescent, and 20+ groups are provided services like meetings, theater, cultural activities, social tourism, camping, and skiing. Twenty to thirty activity directors participate in the events and set up group visits to places such as the Alps. There is a sports center nearby that can no longer be used because it is currently part of the construction site behind Piazza Val Melaina. When active, the sports center has five hundred athletes and one hundred and fifty kids,

all of whom are in local soccer teams that date back to 1945. In addition, there is the Caritas soup kitchen that can feed up to 150 people a day, but does not provide shelter.

The church has also been a support system to the community when times were harsh. They illustrated their commitment to the neighborhood during the drug wave of the 1970's, always opening their doors and providing mental health services to those affected. Caring for the community and embracing all people are main concerns for those who practice liberal theology within the church. 'Radical' priests believe in a community of faith and social function and therefore developed close relationships to community members. This relationship reached a high in 2001 after the church opened its doors as a logistics headquarter in response to a gas pipeline explosion on Via Ventotene that injured many residents and killed a number

of firemen. This event lives on in the collective memory of the neighborhood, appearing in plaques, monuments, and as a frequent topic of conversation in our interviews. The church's role in assisting the community in this difficult event brought the solidified the church's close relationship to the community despite the neighborhood's historic anti-establishment identity.

CONCLUSION

Scrawled in spray paint on a metal construction barrier in the back of Piazza Val Melaina read the words "together we will live forever".

After weeks of studying Val Melaina this statement reads ironically. The neighborhood is going through a significant period of transformation and the word "together" refers to a tenuous sense of unity. Remaining public housing tenants or their descendants, as well as immigrants, youth uninterested in the issues affecting the neighborhood, and various commuters assemble to form a divided community.

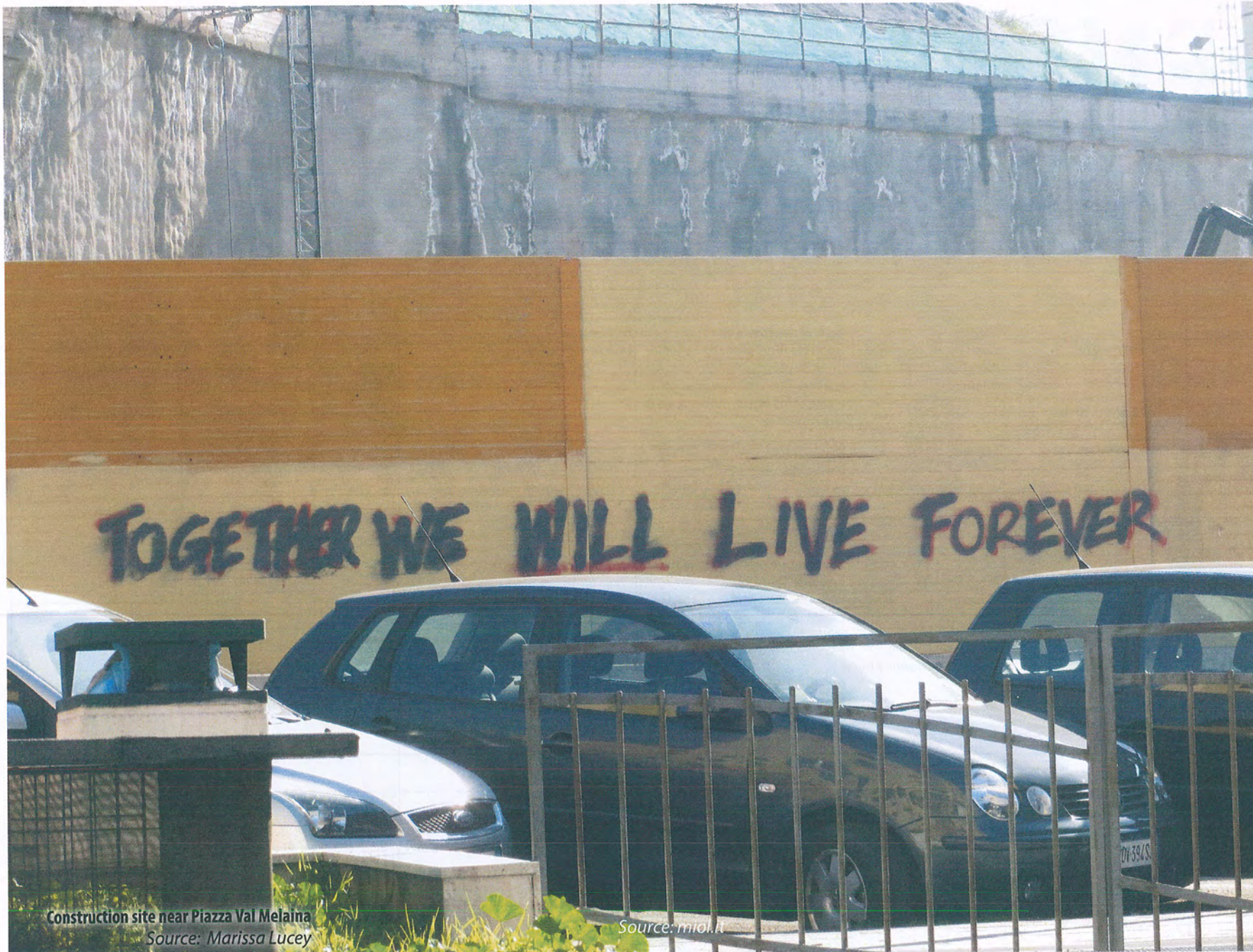
Talking to residents revealed a dissatisfaction and concern for Val Malaina regarding issues of maintenance, the disturbance of metro construction, unemployment, rising rents, and varying opinions on immigrants and the Romani people. It is not all negative though and many also appreciate the neighborhood for

its quiet nature, convenient access to public transit, and its politically charged past. With the opening of the metro stop and Porta di Roma's growing influence, Val Melaina will continue to process these tensions associated with change.

The foreseeable future seems to be divided into two different paths. One sees Val Melaina solidifying its sense of identity, via initiatives put forth by institutions such as the Comitato, while the other witnesses it becoming a passive thruway shaped by external political and economic forces. Facing this dichotomy, it is unsure whether the Val Melaina we know --defined by its birth and identity as an anti-fascist borgata-- will truly be able to "live forever".

The opportunity to study Val Melaina as a model of the the social, economic, and political processes at play in a wider urban context give us great insights into the study of Rome as a whole.

Through its history we observe how nationalistic politics and speculative building lead to a sprawling urban periphery, often populated with a radical citizenry outraged by poor provision of services. The extension of the metro and the development of the Porta di Roma mall exemplify how monumental building projects are to this day carried out without first considering the impact on the communities they will affect most. The elderly population of Val Melaina and the emergence of a youth more internationally aware than locally present spell out problems experienced by aging cities and countries in a globalized society. We gain then from this study, not only an appreciation for how the quartiere of Val Melaina functions unto itself, but through this appreciation how the city of Rome works as a whole.



Construction site near Piazza Val Melaina
Source: Marissa Lucey

Source: mio.it

APPENDIX

STREET SURVEYS

Street Typology

	Typology classification	Type/Size	Sidewalk	State of repair/materials	Traffic Intensity	Cars/Motorcycle parking	Public Transport
Piazza Val Melaina	Piazza	Public Space, Plaza	open spaces, 2-3 people abreast on sidewalks near roads	concrete tiling, good repair. Some trash, especially around overflowing garbage cans and in green space. Some of the marble retaining walls are crumbling	Pedestrian, medium	Parking alongside Via Stampalia and Via Gorgona. Underground parking lot entrances along at corners of Via di Valle Melaina and Gorgona and Stampalia	1 Bus Stop: Valle Melain (along east side of plaza), serving E(C5), U(38,93,339,349), X(80, 80B), n(13). Metro Construction along Scarpanto
Via Stampalia	secondary residential	1 Lane, Connector	2 people abreast	Street: paved, good condition, no paint. Sidewalks: concrete w/aggregate (see photo 1) marble curbs. good condition	Low, automobiles drive slow due to overparking on sidewalks that causes pedestrians to walk in street	Overparking on sidewalks, mostly cars, underground parking along Via di Valle Melaina	--
Via Gorgona	secondary commercial	1 Lane, Connector	2 people abreast	Street: good repair, curbs are a bit torn up. Sidewalks: concrete w/aggregate plus parking vents (see photo 3).	Low, pedestrian use of street	overparking on end near Via di Valle Melaina. Mostly cars, a few motorini.	--
Via Scarpanto (da Via Gorgona a Via Gran Paradiso	Residential Artery	2 lane, Residential Arterial	wide (3 people abreast), occupied at 37 with informal vendor and overflow merchandise from fruteria	Street: Blocked at entrance 1 until Via Gran Paradiso with Metro construction	Pedestrian: medium to high. Auto: none	perpendicular to sidewalk, irregular and overparked at intersection of Scarpanto & Stampalia, alongside metro construction (see photo). 4 motorini parked on sidewalk near intersection of Scarpanto & Gran Paradiso.	--
Courtyards & Paths of Housing Complex 1							--
	1 Pedestrian path	Path	3 abreast	Lots of cracks and patching but transversible	Medium, transient	2 Motorini, 1 Bike	--
	2 Pedestrian Path	Path	3 abreast, smaller paths 1-2 abreast	"	"	13 Motorini in Vicinati, 6 in entrance, 1 broken motorini discarded	--
3 (No access, gated on Via di Valle Melaina & Courtyard	Pedestrian path	Path	"	"	"	--	--

	4	Pedestrian path	Path	"	"	"	8 Motorini in courtyard, 2 in entrance, 2 broken and abandoned, 1 bike	--
	5	Pedestrian path	Paths	"	"	"	3 Motorini, 1 bike	--
	6	Pedestrian path	Paths	Dominated by Monument and surrounding green space, narrow paths 1-2 abreast	"	"	--	--
Via Gran Paradiso (Da Via Scarpanto a Via di Valle Melaina)	secondary residential	1 lane, Residential	South side: good, 1-2 person. North Side: good, wider 2-3 people abreast, but frequently interrupted by private streets	Sidewalks: (Southside) paved but with lots of potholes (northside) pavement, better condition	medium		Southside: Parallel to street of overparked. Northside: overparked on sidewalk at both ends.	--
Via Monte Favino	secondary residential	1 lane, Private Residential	1 person	Pavement, good condition	low		perpendicular parking, overparking on sidewalks	
Via Monte Pattino	secondary residential	1 lane, Private Residential	1 person	Pavement, good condition	low		perpendicular parking, overparking on sidewalks	
Via Monte Bove	Pedestrian path	Private pedestrian residential		Transitable but unclean	low		some presence of motorini	
Via Monte Severo	Pedestrian path	private pedestrian residential		Great, paved with white stone	low		some presence of motorini	
Cross street	Pedestrian path	private pedestrian residential		paved	low			
Via di Viale Melaina (Stampalia-Isole Curzolane)	Commercial Artery	Commercial Arterial, 2 lane divided by median	wide, 4 person wide	Good, some construction obscuring sidewalks up until Gran Paradiso	High		Parallel, some motorini overparked on sidewalk	Valle Melaina (Ventotene) U(38,93,339,349); X (80, 80B); E(C5); n (13);
Via di Monte Massico & Giovanni Conti	Commercial Artery	" except residential	upper sidewalks along shopfronts, lower curbside sidewalks	upper-2 person abreast, concrete or marble pavers; lower-1-2 person abreast pavement	High		cars, parallel, some motorini on sidewalk	Monte Massico U(38,336,338); n (13)
Via delle Isole Curzolane (Via Valle Melaina to Scarpanto)	Residential Artery	Residential 2-lane arterial divided by median	blocked at intersection of Valle Melaina until Monte Favino	Wide, 4 people abreast, covered in sandy material, lots of evidence of dog-walking	medium-high		lots of cars parked on median (designated parking area?)	Isole Curzolane (Monte Bove) U(335,356,338); n (4)
Via Scarpanto (Gran Paradiso to Isole)	Residential Artery	2 lane Residential arterial divided by median	2-3 people abreast	good condition	low-medium		cars parked on median, some overparking at intersections	--
Via Monte Cervialto	Commercial Artery	4 lane commercial arterial	2 people abreast, 3 at intersection of viale melaina	standard, pavement, good quality	Very High		not much parking	Monte Cervialto (Val Melaina) U(335,349); n(4) Monte Cervialto (Baroni) U(335,349,338,339,340,341,342,343,344,345,346,347,348,349,350,351,352,353,354,355,356,357,358,359,360,361,362,363,364,365,366,367,368,369,370,371,372,373,374,375,376,377,378,379,380,381,382,383,384,385,386,387,388,389,390,391,392,393,394,395,396,397,398,399,400,401,402,403,404,405,406,407,408,409,410,411,412,413,414,415,416,417,418,419,420,421,422,423,424,425,426,427,428,429,430,431,432,433,434,435,436,437,438,439,440,441,442,443,444,445,446,447,448,449,450,451,452,453,454,455,456,457,458,459,460,461,462,463,464,465,466,467,468,469,470,471,472,473,474,475,476,477,478,479,480,481,482,483,484,485,486,487,488,489,490,491,492,493,494,495,496,497,498,499,500,501,502,503,504,505,506,507,508,509,510,511,512,513,514,515,516,517,518,519,520,521,522,523,524,525,526,527,528,529,530,531,532,533,534,535,536,537,538,539,540,541,542,543,544,545,546,547,548,549,550,551,552,553,554,555,556,557,558,559,560,561,562,563,564,565,566,567,568,569,570,571,572,573,574,575,576,577,578,579,580,581,582,583,584,585,586,587,588,589,590,591,592,593,594,595,596,597,598,599,600,601,602,603,604,605,606,607,608,609,610,611,612,613,614,615,616,617,618,619,620,621,622,623,624,625,626,627,628,629,630,631,632,633,634,635,636,637,638,639,640,641,642,643,644,645,646,647,648,649,650,651,652,653,654,655,656,657,658,659,660,661,662,663,664,665,666,667,668,669,670,671,672,673,674,675,676,677,678,679,680,681,682,683,684,685,686,687,688,689,690,691,692,693,694,695,696,697,698,699,700,701,702,703,704,705,706,707,708,709,710,711,712,713,714,715,716,717,718,719,720,721,722,723,724,725,726,727,728,729,730,731,732,733,734,735,736,737,738,739,740,741,742,743,744,745,746,747,748,749,750,751,752,753,754,755,756,757,758,759,760,761,762,763,764,765,766,767,768,769,770,771,772,773,774,775,776,777,778,779,780,781,782,783,784,785,786,787,788,789,790,791,792,793,794,795,796,797,798,799,800,801,802,803,804,805,806,807,808,809,810,811,812,813,814,815,816,817,818,819,820,821,822,823,824,825,826,827,828,829,830,831,832,833,834,835,836,837,838,839,840,841,842,843,844,845,846,847,848,849,850,851,852,853,854,855,856,857,858,859,860,861,862,863,864,865,866,867,868,869,870,871,872,873,874,875,876,877,878,879,880,881,882,883,884,885,886,887,888,889,890,891,892,893,894,895,896,897,898,899,900,901,902,903,904,905,906,907,908,909,910,911,912,913,914,915,916,917,918,919,920,921,922,923,924,925,926,927,928,929,930,931,932,933,934,935,936,937,938,939,940,941,942,943,944,945,946,947,948,949,950,951,952,953,954,955,956,957,958,959,960,961,962,963,964,965,966,967,968,969,970,971,972,973,974,975,976,977,978,979,980,981,982,983,984,985,986,987,988,989,990,991,992,993,994,995,996,997,998,999,1000)
Via Camillo Iacobini	secondary residential	1 lane residential	1 person	concrete w/large aggregate (elevated, very high curbs)	medium		parallel parked cars	Iacobini (casati) U (335)
Via Ventotene	secondary commercial	1 lane connector	2 person abreast	motorini overparked (1 person abreast), uneven and patchy	low		parallel parked cars	--
Piazzale Jonio	Commercial artery	multi lane commercial arterial, divided by median	4-5 person abreast	some benches and informal vending activity, covered in sandy material	very high		perpendicular along curb, some motorini overparked	P.Le Jonio U (69); Prati Fiscali (Val Melaina) U(69); n (13)

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Street surveys

Date:

Interviewer(s):

Time:

Note taker(s):

Interviewee:

Gender: M/F

Age:

Origin:

Destination:

Questions:

Do you live here? If not, why are you in the neighborhood and how much time do you normally spend here?

What is the most serious issue/problem affecting Val Melaina today? If you don't identify any problems, what are the strengths of the neighborhood?

What direction do you feel the neighborhood will move in the next 5 years?

Do you commute primarily by car or public transport and how will the construction of the new metro lines changes (Conco d'Oro & Jonio) change that?

What goods/services do you buy close to home instead of traveling for? What goods/services do you have to leave the neighborhood to acquire? Where do you go for these?

Do you buy things at the Porta Roma mall that you could buy in Val Melaina? How has it affected your decision to shop and do you feel it has impacted businesses here?

What is the sense of community in Val Melaina? Has it changed over time?

INTERVIEW NOTES

21 February 13 - Commercial Areas, Market

Interviewer: Francesca

Note takers: Francesca, Jerald

Interviews conducted in Commercial area of Via dei Prati Fiscali

The small shopping mall here hosts a McDonalds, an Upim, a Carrefour, a Brico, a Supermercato, and Ottica Romani, and a Lotto Bar. There is space for parking on the main floor and also in a separate parking area above. The most visible stores here like McDonalds and Carrefour compete at a national or global level but some of the smaller ones like the Lotto Bar compete on a more local scale. Most people here are Italians from ages 20 to 50. The area was populated with young people despite it being around 12pm on a Thursday. There are often immigrants outside of the Ottica Romani and Lotto Bar passing the time or selling goods informally on the street. They seem to be Filipino and African. One of the Filipinos asked if we had work available when we passed by.

Interviewee 1&2

Gender: M & F

Age: 20's

This Italian couple told us they live close to but not in the Val Melaina area. They often drive to the shopping center here for clothes and groceries.

Interviewee 3

Gender: F

Age: mid 20s

This woman was sitting alone at the McDonalds drinking a coffee when we approached her. There were also other Italians inside on their computers working or having conversations. The stores seem to function like the light dining areas and the ample seating space provided makes it a convenient area to meet up and have a conversation. Before the Porta di Roma shopping mall was built, she used to spend her time on Viale Libia or at Conca d'Oro closer to Val Melaina. Since the shopping center was finished she will travel there by automobile and spend time with her friends in that area 15-20 minutes away from Val Melaina. Other young people we've interviewed also said they spend most of their free time with friends in the Porta di Roma area.

Real Estate Office on Viale Tirreno

Interviewee 4&5

Gender: F

Age: 40-50's

The rental market in Val Melaina took a big hit during the financial crisis. The rent for the real estate office was 1000 euro/month around the market peak in 2007/2008 and has since fallen to around 700 euro/month. The local commerce has suffered during the crisis with many stores on the secondary commercial arteries like Via Ventotene closing down. The opening of the Porta di Roma shopping mall has also hurt local businesses that are unable to compete with globally and nationally competitive businesses concentrated nearby. Numerous businesses have shut down over the past five years but it seems the market has stabilized. When asked how they feel about the next five years in Val Melaina they expressed uncertainty. However, they feel new B1 metro line has the potential to better the Val Melaina area by spurring demand for real estate in the area and attracting more customers. Some of their clients looking for new housing are students graduating from La Sapienza who find Val Melaina cheap, well integrated with the city center, and close to cultural spots. Demographically, the area is dominated by families and old people.

Skateboard shop

Interviewee 6

Gender: M

Age: mid 20s

There is a skate and street wear shop along Vaile Torreon in our secondary study area where we talked for a while with the owner. He talked about a "Chinese invasion" in Val Melaina where they are buying up commercial and residential real estate. He was trying to expand his shop a couple of years ago but was beaten in a bidding war. He said the Chinese will buy at prices well above the market value and pay in cash. It started off with commercial storefront space on the ground floor of buildings and has moved on to the residential areas above these stores. Being able to pay in cash is difficult to beat since the seller doesn't have to declare the payment or pay taxes on it. He also expressed uncertainty when asked about the next five years for Val Melaina. His store survived the crisis well because he is one of only three stores that sells street wear and skateboard equipment in Rome and this is a very niche market.

Societa Bocciofila

Interviewee 7

Gender: M

Age: 65

The Bocciofila is a community center where retired and old men spend their time. There is a cafe/bar, a small room with a slot machine, an outdoor area, a Bocciofila court, and a library. It functions as a social and cultural association financed by fees the owning association charges for membership. It was originally an area that was squatted in the 1960s but they reached an agreement with the government where they pay rent in order to continue using the area. The man we talked to specified that they pay a free donation and not rent but this was likely semantics since it fulfills the purpose of rent. This building used to be a big center for Bocciofila of the Federation Italiana Bocce but it has since lost its fame since young people don't play the game. The library also functions as a community area where they host dances, meetings, and parties for children. The books in it are donated by local people in the area.

Market

Interviewee 8

President

Gender: Female

Age: 40

The market is a bustling area during the day where people can buy food, toys, and clothes. We met the president of the association that runs the market, Signora Franca, who runs the bread stand and talked to us about the functioning of the market. She is the president of the market association and the coordinator of the market dealers. She works with Bangladeshi immigrants who have some of the stands. The market used to be at Piazza Jonio but was forced to move 10 years ago when the area was cleared for parking space and a piazza. The official reason was for hygiene as drug users congregated at night when the market closed and viability. However, the political reason for moving the market from its original place since the borgata was built was the Comune decided to create parking during the Giubileo (Jubilee), known as the P.U.P (Programma Urbano Parcheggi). The area the market is now is the private property of a company called IMPS. Although the Comune occupied the space and gave the market permission to operate there, they did not buy it and the Comune hasn't paid any rent for 10 years. Technically IMPS could force the market to vacate the space and Franca has a constant fear of this. The IMPS has already taken legal action against the Comune, asking for 530 thousand euro as payment for the delinquent rent. During these ten years the Comune has asked the merchants of the market for rent. Maintenance gets paid internally by association members and has become tougher with the opening of a clothing market directly to the North of the current one. This area has a license for 20 shops but there are often as many as 63. One time Signora Franca had to remove some people who were selling live chickens at the outdoor clothing market. One of the main issues is that the market is a major landmark and plays a key function in the community but it has no official status.

7 March 13 - Societa Bocciofila, Cafe, Parrucchiere

Interviewer: Viviana

Note takers: Drew , Lillian

Interviews conducted in Societa Bocciofila

Interviewee 9

Gender: M

Age: 50's

Moved into the public housing projects on Via Jacobin in 2000 and now works as truck driver delivering cheese in the area. When asked what the most concerning problems of Val Melaina were he mentioned the presence of gypsies and associated small criminality such as theft. When asked how the neighborhood could be improved he said that politicians shouldn't pour money into projects like the new metro station and Porta Roma mall, but instead should promote and maintain associations like the Bocciofila club that allow for the community to come together to play bocce, use the library, etc.

Interviewee 10

Gender: M

Age: 60's

Lives in public housing at the corner of Via Monte Cervialto and Jacobini since 1962. He said he likes living in the neighborhood because he says it feels like a village, not like Rome; he has his family, friends, and bocce here. In regards to the biggest problems facing Val Melaina he pointed out the increasing presence of immigrants, especially Roma and the thievery that accompanies their presence. The Porta Roma mall in his opinion is too far away for it to be worth shopping at and he said it has been detrimental to businesses in the neighborhood that were already suffering even before the mall was constructed. They are now hurting more than ever. The Metro project he said had no impact on his daily life, but he thought would be a positive thing for younger people who want to look for work or get out of the neighborhood. He also believed that more funding should be made available for the creation and maintenance of societies like the Bocciofila. He adds that many politicians say they will do things, and help out, but in the end no one cares and nothing is accomplished.

Interviews conducted in Bar at Corner of Via Monte Cervialto and Via di Valle Melaina

Interviewee 11

Gender: M

Age: 30's

We talked to the owner of the bar, a native of Verona who moved here less than two years ago. He lives near Conca d'Oro. He said he likes the neighborhood because it is always full of people which is good for business. In his opinion the biggest problem facing the neighborhood was maintenance of streets and sidewalks. He went so far even to say that ideally, "the whole neighborhood needed to be reconstructed". He acknowledged that there is a presence of Roma in the community, but that they are not a problem and actually do a small service to the community by removing recyclable from the trash that they clean and reuse. The construction of the new metro he saw as positive because it will attract more people to the area, especially young people. He apologized for not knowing more about how the neighborhood has changed over time because he is new to the area.

Interview 12

Gender: M

Age: 40's

The other man working at the bar also lives near Conca d'oro. This gentleman was much shier and didn't say much other than expressing that he thought the presence of Roma was a problem because they contributed to crime in the area.

Interviewee 13:

Gender: M

Age: 30's

This man walked into the cafe bar to order a glass of orange juice. He lives in a public housing project in Tufello and works as the president of a sports association to the southeast of Piazza Jonio in the 5th municipio. He said the greatest problem facing the area was high unemployment, especially among youth and for this reason he thought the construction of the Metro was a positive thing. While he didn't think that it would necessarily bring new people into the neighborhood he thought it would improve the quality of life for the residents and open access to more jobs. He had mixed feelings about the Porta Roma mall, saying that a lot of people found jobs there, including his friends and people now go there to hang out, however shops within the neighborhood, especially those run by long-time elderly residents can't compete and go out of business. Due to the high density of public housing he said that the neighborhood is generally left leaning, but that he didn't vote in the last election because he is not interested in politics.

Interviews conducted in Restaurant hidden from street by metro construction

Interviewee 14

Gender: M

Age: 40's

This man said he normally leaves his home when he doesn't want to think any more about all of the problems within his neighborhood and Italy in general, so he was pretty upset that we made him think about these things outside of his home. Despite this, he had some very strong negative opinions that he shared with us, more so about the political situation in Italy in general than Val Melaina specifically. He noted that in his opinion politicians only care about themselves, and not the citizen. He said one of the biggest problems people, especially younger people going homeless in their car due to rising rents and lack of jobs. He's witnessed people taking food out of recycling bins because they can't afford to eat. He said security has also become an issue as poverty leads to an increase in criminal offenses caused by desperation. The construction of the metro is causing problems for the businesses in the neighborhood. The restaurant specifically is suffering from a lack of street visibility and experienced cracked pavement inside the restaurant that the owner had to fix out of pocket. He estimates they're losing about 1,000 euro a day due to the lack of visibility. He also considers the mall a failed project because many of the shops within are going out of business, especially the bars. In regards to public housing he said that many policemen live here because they are given deals on the housing rates.

Interviewee 15:

Gender: M

Age: 70's

The owner of the restaurant now being blocked from the street by the metro construction. He complained about security as a major issue. He said the police are unresponsive to the citizenry and that someone could walk in and rob his till at any time and the law wouldn't do anything about it. He becomes particularly worried at night because he is the only establishment open during those hours and doesn't know who he would turn to for help. He openly criticized all politicians as only being self-servient and not interested in serving the people except for making false promises around election time.

Interviews conducted in Parrucchiere along Scarpanto

Interviewee 16:

Gender: F

Age: 40's

The woman operates the Parrucchiere along with her sister in the ground floor of the main 1930's housing complex where they have both lived since childhood. She said the major problems facing the area were the low level of maintenance of streets and sidewalks and also the presence of homeless people with drug and alcohol addictions that hang out in Piazza Val Melaina around the corner after receiving free meals from the charitable organization up on the hill. She said the neighborhood has changed a lot since she was a kid. The general demographic has gotten much older. Instead of going to oratorio or other church activities like her and her sister did, all of the kids go and hang out at the mall after school. Because of these two shifts she said the neighborhood is very empty in the afternoon. All of the old people do their shopping in the morning and then have no reason to go out and all the young people are at the mall, leaving the neighborhood vacant. Businesses in the area have been suffering because of the mall, but also because of the construction of the underground parking in Piazza Val Melaina, which obscured several shop fronts to the point where they had to close. She said politicians don't pay much attention to the neighborhood, except for on Nov. 27th, when the neighborhood gets cleaned up for the memorial service dedicated to the firemen that died during the gas explosion of Via Ventotene. She let us know that in order for the metro construction to happen, the city had to pay a sum

of money to the church which owned a piece of land where a community soccer field and other facilities existed. These facilities are now obviously closed, but that the community plans to rebuild them when the construction is over.

Interviewee 17:
Gender: F
Age: 60's

This woman moved to the neighborhood 15 years ago and said she likes it because it is well connected to public transit and she can get to the mall, metro station, and other locations easily by bus. She also thought the neighborhood was in general improving. In regards to the mall she saw both positive and negative consequences. She said that it is a comfortable place for her and her family to go for the Sunday passeggiata. It is not very far, air-conditioned in the summer and heated in the winter. However, she mentioned that it replaced their old tradition of going to more historic and faraway places like Villa Alda. She said the mall is nice from a shopping standpoint because a lot of shops exist that sell products that you can't find in the neighborhood. However it's presence is also causing rents to rise in the area and make local shop owners go out of business.

Interviewee 18:
Gender: F
Age: 20's

The daughter of the Parruchierre owners. She commented that she spends almost every afternoon at the mall with her friends. Her mom jokingly said she might as well sleep there because she spends so much time in that place.

Flower vending kiosk at Corner of Via delle Isole Curzolane and Valle Melaina

Interviewee 19&20:
Gender: M
Age: 20's-30's

These two north African immigrants said they've only owned the shop in Val Melaina for one month and that they live in Conco D'oro. Because they haven't lived in the neighborhood they politely apologized for not knowing much about it. They did say that they liked the place because it is a quiet neighborhood and there aren't a lot of problems. They didn't have a strong opinion on the mall because they were new and thought it was too far away to affect their business.

Strip Mall on Via Prati Fiscali

Interviewee 21:
Gender: F
Age: 50's
Ethnicity: Southeast Asian

We caught this woman exiting the Carrefour express, wanting to evaluate whether people from Val Melaina use this area for shopping. She said that she comes here probably about once a week to do the bigger grocery shopping for her family but does smaller daily things, like

Interviewee 23

Loreina - Vice president of the comitato
Gender: F
Age: 30's and 40's

The neighborhood association came into being in 2010 as a non-partisan organization. They organize different events and parties for the children and for holidays such as Easter and Christmas and offer other services to the community such as web and radio casting as well as a newspaper. In July 2012 they organized a photo installation in the courtyard of the palazzone titled "Val Melaina: Le Nostre Radici," displaying historic photos of the neighborhood. Also in 2012 they organized a movement to prevent the construction of a metro stop that would involve the dismantling and relocation of the market. The association became close to the president of the market during this intervention and recently she agreed to give the association a free location for meeting on the market site, as they currently meet in Arianna's house.. They also have acquired a meeting space in the abandoned library of the school behind the church. Currently the association is heading up a project with Palestra Popolare Valerio to gather and recycle bottle tops. The proceeds will go to supporting the cost of the above mentioned events, but also towards addressing issues of accessibility in the neighborhood--lack of ramps, lifts in the case nuove popolare, etc. The association also acts as the voice of the citizens to the community government. They take it upon themselves to gather the complaints of the citizens in community meetings which they structure based on the Indignati philosophy. People convene in an open space such as the piazza. No agenda is set and each person talks as they may without the intermediary of a leader or mediator. The group mediates itself and when they feel that someone has been talking for too long, etc, the use hand signals to signal that they should stop. The association then collects the comments and presents them to the comune. After the associations success in defending the market place in 2012, the comune has been in favor, or at least more receptive, to this kind of participatory planning. Arianna and Lorena did clarify that despite this new cooperation the relationship between the comune and the neighborhood is still problematic.

Arianna and Lorena defined the three overarching problems of the neighborhood as:

-physical deterioration

lack of maintenance of streets, sidewalks, green and public spaces, presence of graffiti, antiquated and inadequate storm drains (especially in the palazzone, the ground floor of which flooded in October 2011)

-social deterioration

as interest of young people in neighborhood issues and civic culture is fading, especially after the construction of the Porta di Roma mall where they all go to hang out instead of within the neighborhood.

-impaired accessibility

due to state of roads and sidewalks, lack of lifts in the case nuove popolari

Like most neighborhoods on the periphery, they pointed out that they are underserved by public services such as the police control that would keep the graffiti off the buildings, attention from the Parks department that would tend to the green spaces, the duty of ATER to repair the antiquated storm drains, and maintenance of the streets that is promised by the comune. In regards to street maintenance, the comune has promised to do a better job after construction of the metro has finished. The date of this is unclear. It started 3 years ago and should be reading for testin in April. It should be open to the public approximately a year after that.

When asked about other institutions in the neighborhood, it sounds like they work most closely with the Palestra Popolare Velario, a left-leaning squat on the border of Val Melaina and Tufello. The Bocefila they said is a group of old comrades from the communist party. There used to be a right-leaning squat in the abandoned parini school south of the neighborhood, but they have been "chased out" as this neighborhood is clearly Red, or leftist, avid supporters of the AS Roma futbol team.

We asked them about the presence of immigrants in the neighborhood since it was a common point of discussion in our other interviews. They said there are generally two types. Some immigrants come in from outside the city to receive meals from Caritas, which occupies the old parish of Ss Redentore on top the hill that overlooks the neighborhood. The others are residents, possibly of indian, filipino, or chinese descent that may have married into italian families and live in the public housing projects. The negative connotation some residents might have of the immigrants comes from the men, mostly romanian, that come down and drink beer in the Piazza after receiving their meals.

In regards to the metro, Lorena and Arianna said it's still up in the air whether or not it will be of benefit or burden to the community. They hope that they increased presence of people will increase incentive for the comune and parks department, etc to perform more regular maintenance in the neighborhood. However, as perhaps is more common in peripheral areas, it may just lead to more traffic and status quo maintenance resulting in even greater deterioration. The association is currently trying to work with the comune to design the new metro stop, specifically in acquiring a green roof for the building and a sensory garden built for handicapped children. The garden would include raised beds for children in wheelchairs, braille explanations for the blind and aromatic plants such as rosemary.

Arianna and Lorena are optimistic that the conditions in the neighborhood will improve, especially with the municipio's new willingness to

14 March 2013 - Comitato di Quartiere, Ss Redentore

Interviewer: Greg
Note takers: Drew, Lillian

Interviews conducted in Blue Bar

Interviewee 22
Arianna - President of Agora? the Comitato di Quartiere di Val Melaina
Gender: F
Age: 30's

work with participatory planning and if the elections go well this coming May. Lorena said that she has two children. Her 30 year old would leave Italy altogether if he could. Her 18 year old is planning to stay in the neighborhood. She said that many people realize after moving out that Val Melaina that is a close-knit community, not a close-minded one, which is how many people feel about it before experiencing life in other places. They eventually come back. It's like a village here. You can go out at night because you feel at home, even with the crazy people, whom you know. It's a safe place, even if the metro construction has created some dark and shady patches in the neighborhood.

Arianna and Lorena also explained a bit of the history of the neighborhood. The big main public housing project is referred to as the Palazzone, and was built in the 1932 by the Istituto Fascista di Case Popolare. It originally housed 2,500 residents that paid between 58-120 lire/month for rent. It was a center of leftist resistance and was commonly referred to as "Stalingrad" by the residents. At that time of construction the Palazzone was the only building in the countryside. The area in front of it, where the piazza is now, was a large wetland. The first residents were immigrants from the south, local residents that used to live in informal dwellings, and other general public housing applicants. The complex of houses immediately north of the palazzone are known as the case nuove popolare, built in the 40's. The government built them in order to relocate the residents of two rival barrache, Shanghai and Pecchino, located on piazzale Jonio. The case nove housed the warning siren for bombing during WWII. A bomb shelter used to occupy the green space where the city is currently constructing the new metro stop. That, along with a creche that the neighborhood would light up during the holidays, had to be demolished for the new stop, destroying small pieces of the neighborhood's history.

Other random notes: Asked how they keep the central courtyard of the Palazzone clean. They responded that there is a real cooperative spirit about it. Someone starts the initiative and the rest gather in. One time several residents of the neighborhood gathered up all the garbage in the Piazza Val Melaina and gift wrapped. They then delivered to the Municipio as a present. The municipio did not think it was a great gift.

Before the association formed, around 2006, several of its members were involved in an effort to save a nearby park, Parco delle Valli, in Conca d'oro that the city wanted to develop. The park is perhaps the natural equivalent of the mall in that young people will meet up in their free time according to Lorena and Arianna.

Interviews conducted in office at Parrocchia Ss Redentore a Val Melaina

Interviewer: Greg

Note takers: Marissa, Jerald

Interviewee 24

Padre Gaetano

Gender: Male

Age: 30-40

The pastor at the parish of S.S. Redentore has been at the church for four years after spending five years volunteering and running the youth center associated with the church. The church was opened in 2001 after the gas explosion that had happened in the public housing complex across the street in which eight people were killed and 1500 were evacuated. Initially, after opening, Italy used the operational spaces as headquarters. This was the first time the Italian state used a non-institutional site for its official activities. The space also served as a meeting place for the community, who thereafter recognized the importance presence of the parish. Beforehand there had been tension since many people saw the church's space as a waste where there could be housing but the explosion was a turning point.

The parish's land has had a connection to religion as far back as the 1930's, according to the pastor. The church is one of 12 different parishes within the region. People who lived on the land were relocated in the 1930s to the hill above the church. In 1935, the land was donated for religious purposes in 1935 by the diocese Roman Agency for the Preservation of Faith. From 1935 to 1977 all activities took place on the adjacent hill until the church was inaugurated in 1977. They intended to inaugurate it two years earlier but there was conflict with terrorists from Valle d'Urbano. Amatto and Urbano were murdered and there was graffiti in the area showing the public opinion for more housing area instead of a church.

The church has a youth center the current pastor used to run. The Caritas cafeteria feeds one hundred fifty people a day, but does provide shelter. In the 90's, the gymnasium that is close to the cafeteria became a place for the elderly to retreat and eat. There's been a decrease in old people at the cafeteria and most of the current users are from nearby areas but not Val Melaina.

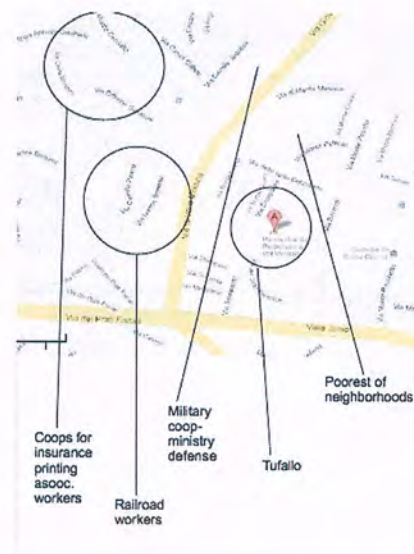
The hill was and still is a place for many activities, which range from theater to cultural meetings to social tourism. There is an infant, adolescent, and 20+ group to whom the church provides services like meetings, theater, cultural activities, social tourism, camping, and skiing. Twenty to thirty activity directors participate in the events and set up group visits to places such as the Alps. There is a sports center nearby that can no longer be used because it is currently the construction site behind Piazza Val Melaina. When active, the sports center has

five hundred athletes and one hundred and fifty kids, all of whom are in local soccer teams that date back to 1945. Originally, the site used to be a potato field that was surrounded by shanties. Once on the subject of soccer, we ventured further into soccer orientation. The crowd that comes to watch the soccer games the church streams is split 50/50 between Roma and Lazio. There are a mix of soccer orientation among those who play in the complex, but the young kids do not have strong political feelings.

Jerald ask about community problems, which allowed the pastor to then describe the transformation that occurred in the neighborhood. Shantytowns that torn down and converted into public housing influenced by mafia corruption were evident in Val Melaina between the 1930s and 60's. There were barracks here called Shanghai and Picino. In the 1970s, the Val Melaina community experienced a wave of heavy drug abuse, specifically heroin. Half of the kids in the neighborhood had died from overdose. However, organizations for drug control and mental health services developed in the 1960s to combat the problems of drug use and mental health. Caring for the community and embracing all people are main concerns for those who practice liberal theology within the church. 'Radical' priests believe in a community of faith and social function and therefore are close to community members and are against 'institution'. Some of the radical liberal theologians would move into the shanties. The community came to respect these people and the conflict was more with the Roman Catholic Church as an institution but not the individuals at the local one. The church played an important social function as a support for the drug riddled neighborhood.

Originally Val Melaina and surrounding areas were predominantly farmland in the 1930s, except for a famous garden city, Vio Mentana, nearby. There are low density villas in a nearby area. Tufello was home to lower income levels and railroad workers lived on the hills. During the 1970s rail worker housing was constructed on the hill across from Val Melaina and there's still a strong railworker lobby.

A billion dollar complex recently was built for a catholic school, of which accepted Porta de Roma kids. The school was high quality, affordable, very close to a rich and exclusive neighborhood. Many young people are moving into the Porta di Roma area since many of the recent privately developed homes are too expensive and this is shifting residential and commercial activity in that direction. There is a parish at the border of Prati Fiscali that is richer. The Prati Fiscali area to the east is high income while Val Melaina is middle and lower income. Much of the development happening along the border of Prati Fiscali is actually encroached into Val Melaina's spacing and making it more expensive. In the past there was a military coup along the southern part led by the poor residents of the start housing and railroad workers. The sport complex currently being occupied for construction used to have regional competitions between Val Melaina and Tu Fello. The pastor showed us a map of Val Melaina, which was underneath the plastic covering of his desk.



He also mentioned that Piazza Val Melaina is subject to flooding since it used to be a swamp. The parking spaces around the piazza are paid for by the city and are city property. The market moved out after 2001.

Interesting fact:

Americans help pay for the theater

7 March 13 - Biblioteca Comunale Ennio Flaiano

Interviewer: Carlotta

Note takers: Drew, Jerald

Interviews conducted in Biblioteca

Interviewee 25

Marisa - Responsabile della biblioteca

Gender: F

Age: 40's

Marisa first gave us a brief history on the public libraries in Rome leading up to the founding of the Biblioteca Comunale Ennio Flaiano. Libraries, usually attached to schools, were a strong center for the promotion of fascist ideals during the Ventennio but they went into decay after the fall of the regime. In the 1980's the city decided to start reinvesting in public libraries in the name of developing cultural activity, allotting 1 per municipio or in some cases, 1 per quartiere. The first library in the area started in an abandoned school in Talenti, but it was too small a space (100 sq.m.) so in the 1990's it was moved to its current location, a facility of 800 sq.m. The institutionalization of Roman public libraries in the 1990's also lead to an adjustment in the funding structure; more popular libraries were given more funds to foster their projects.

The current library hosts a range of services for the community besides the standard free book lending

For just 5 €/year community members can by a bibliocard to access the **Medioteca**, the library's computer lab. The card also provides discount on various cultural activities (film, theatre, etc.) around the city and allows users to request books from other library systems. The proceedings from the membership fee go to fund cultural activities hosted by the library. Recent immigrants are some of the most common users of this service, as they use internet to contact their families back home and wouldn't be able to afford it otherwise. The library hands out about 30 new bibliocards a month.

The library also functions as an important **public space**. Citizens can come to sit and read books or newspapers, regardless of whether they own a standard library card or not. This creates a welcoming space for groups like immigrants, who may not have the proper documents to sign up for a library card in the first place. If you do have the proper documentation, you can sign up for a standard library card to gain free check out access to the books, DVDs and CDs in the library's catalog.

The library organizes a number of **cultural activities**, for youth, elderly, and immigrant populations. Many of these focus around film culture, in honor of their namesake Ennio Flaiano, a famous Italian screenwriter who worked with Fellini and lived in neighboring Montesacro. Every Mondays from 8-10 they arrange presentations of books or **film screenings**. Often these programs focus on presenting different cultures from around the globe. This coming May will see a lot of additional programming as it is the official "month of books" and the 10 year anniversary of the library's opening.

Multiple **services for disabled users** are integrated in the library's collections and programming. They offer classes for parents and teachers of autistic or otherwise mentally-challenged students and will buy supplementary books to keep on reserve based on the current demand. This service draws users from outside of the immediate area because of its utility compared to other similar programs. Multiple blind children live in the neighborhood which encouraged the library to build a collection of braille services. The library currently owns a large set of braille books, including tactile picture books for young children, a braille writer, and a collection of board games, such as chess, adapted for blind users.

The library's collection of books is constantly being revised based on the needs of the users. This is particularly important for the immigrant users, as the library constantly adapts its foreign language collection based on demand. Currently the predominant immigrants that use the library come from Russia, Poland, Romania, and Morocco.

The library maintains a **strong connection with the schools** in the area, as Marisa remarked that the Italian public library system historically emphasized accessibility for kids. All of the schools hold orientations at the library to introduce their students to the library. The library supports other programs to introduce first time users to the library and encourage return visits. For small children the organize creativity workshops based on Bruno Munari's engaging art books, books that might be too expensive for parents to buy. They also hold musical activities that draw people in that might otherwise not visit the library. Education levels in the neighborhood are generally low and children drop out of school as early as legally possible. The library gears a lot of these introduction programs towards this demographic to get them hooked on books and keep learning even if they decide to stop attending school. Marisa seemed fairly satisfied with their efforts thus far.

The library promotes certain activities geared toward senior citizens, such as gardening, through the local senior center. They also frequently attend the film screenings. Marisa commented that it provides an alternative space for elderly people to gather and experience culture. Besides the schools the library also maintains a relationship with the youth center(s) and other civic organizations in the neighborhood through the Spazio Giovanile help desk located in the Medioteca. Kids in the area can come here to look for information on job openings or other possible activities to get involved in.

While no formal relationship exists between Caritas and the library, a link does exist through its immigrant users. Many of the immigrants that attend the soup kitchen come to the library afterward to use the internet, take part in the film screenings, or play chess. The library initially stocked many foreign language newspapers they thought this demographic might want to read but they went unused. They introduced the chess boards and these became a great hit.

The library and parrocchia do not interact on a very regular basis. The church usually holds independent activities and maintains its own library, though it isn't free and open to the public, so it attracts a different demographic..

Marisa testified to how greatly the library has changed over the last 10 years since she started working there, back when the library still occupied the abandoned school house in Talenti. The users then were much different, mostly students or teachers, and of a higher socio-economic class reflecting the makeup of Talenti. Not much activity occurred besides book lending.

The users belong to a more popular class now, as reflected by the residents of the Val Melaina area. It sees heavy usage now, especially during the afternoons from kids and immigrants after school gets out.

Upon its opening the library faced considerable opposition from the criminal underclass in the neighborhood that employed kids to sell drugs and. Marisa characterized this period as a "fight" between the library and the criminals, who saw the library's efforts to give the kids a safe place to hang out and engage in reading or other cultural activities as bad for business. Theft of computers was common at first, as was vandalism, including the smashing of windows. One summer the library installed air-conditioning. This brought a lot of the elderly population to the library that were looking for a place to get out of the heat. The presence of these denizens slowly warded off the criminals according to Marisa. The library began more programming during the day to keep people at the library longer into the evenings. Buffets were popular. They still do these today, often incorporating ethnic food and dance, film showings, etc to accommodate the immigrant population. Their most recent of such events was an Arabic culture night. With the continuation of such program the library firmly established its place in the neighborhood and won out the fight against the criminals.

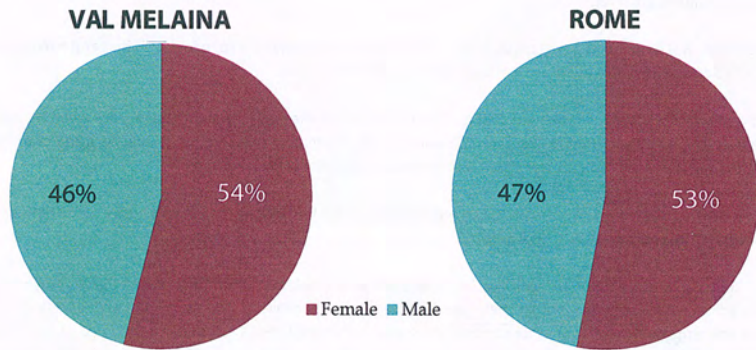
The influx of immigrants began about 8 years with eastern Europeans in the care industry that came to take care of the aging population. They have been coming ever since.

The community while still very much working class and "popular" no longer maintains the strong communist identity that defined it for so long. Landmarks used to be the party headquarters on Via Scarpanto and the CAF accounting agency based in the palazzone. With the administration change 3 years ago to a right wing party the church has perhaps become a more important landmark, according to Marisa. The library, according to her, was also one of the most important local landmarks and meeting points.

DEMOGRAPHICS

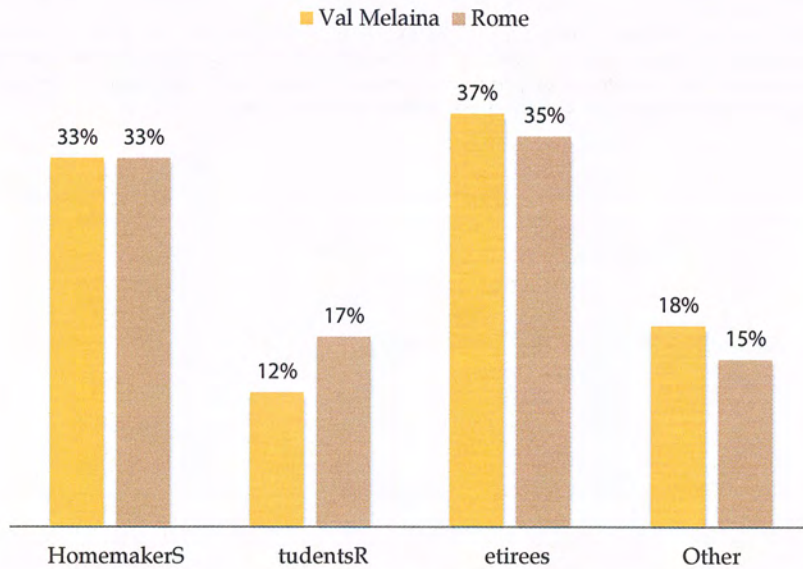
Gender Distribution

Source: ISTAT 2001



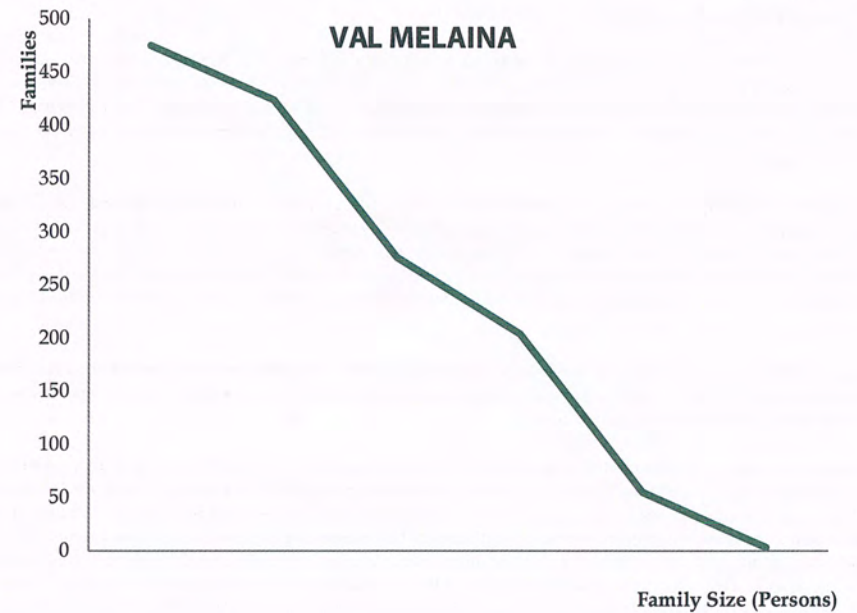
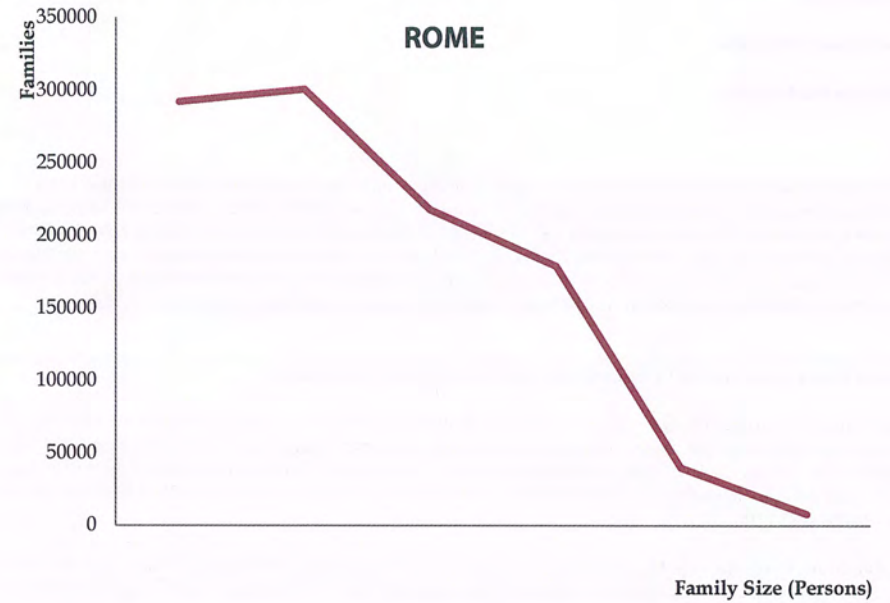
Citizens not part of the Work Force

Source: ISTAT 2001



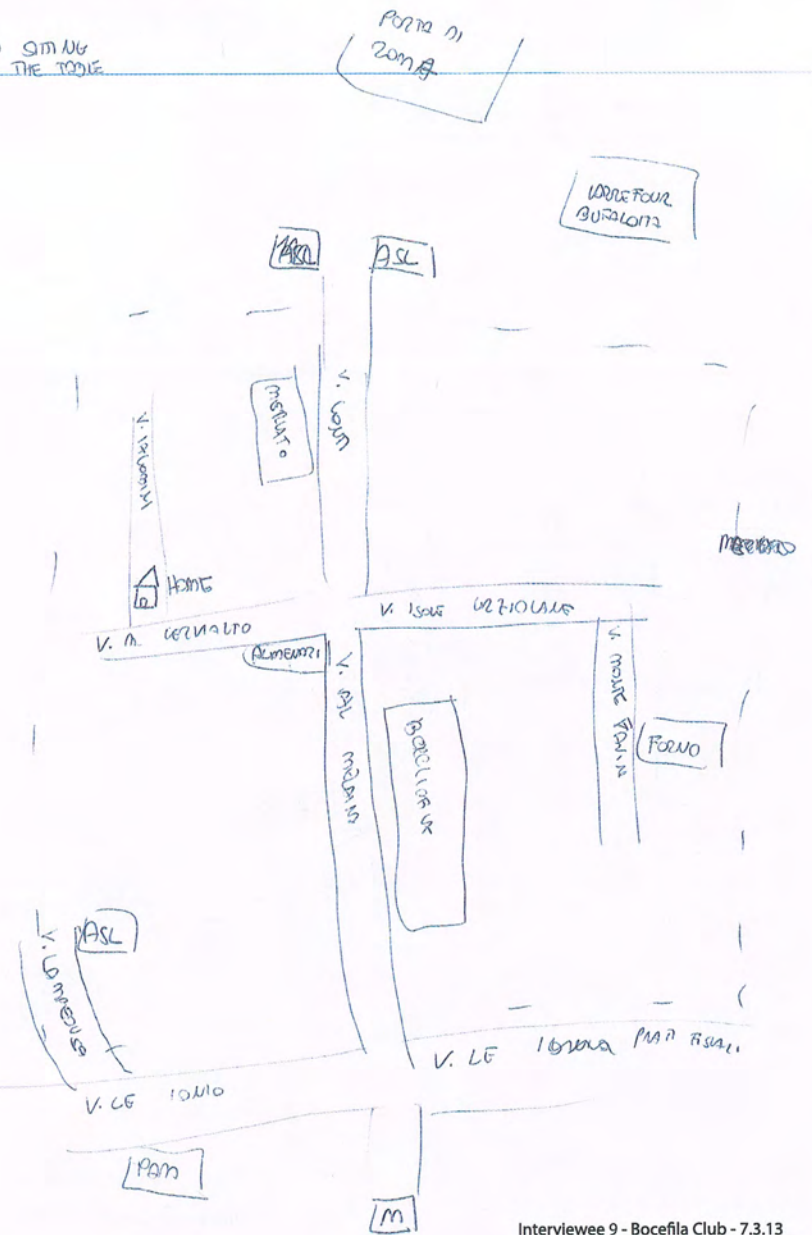
Family density

Source: ISTAT 2001

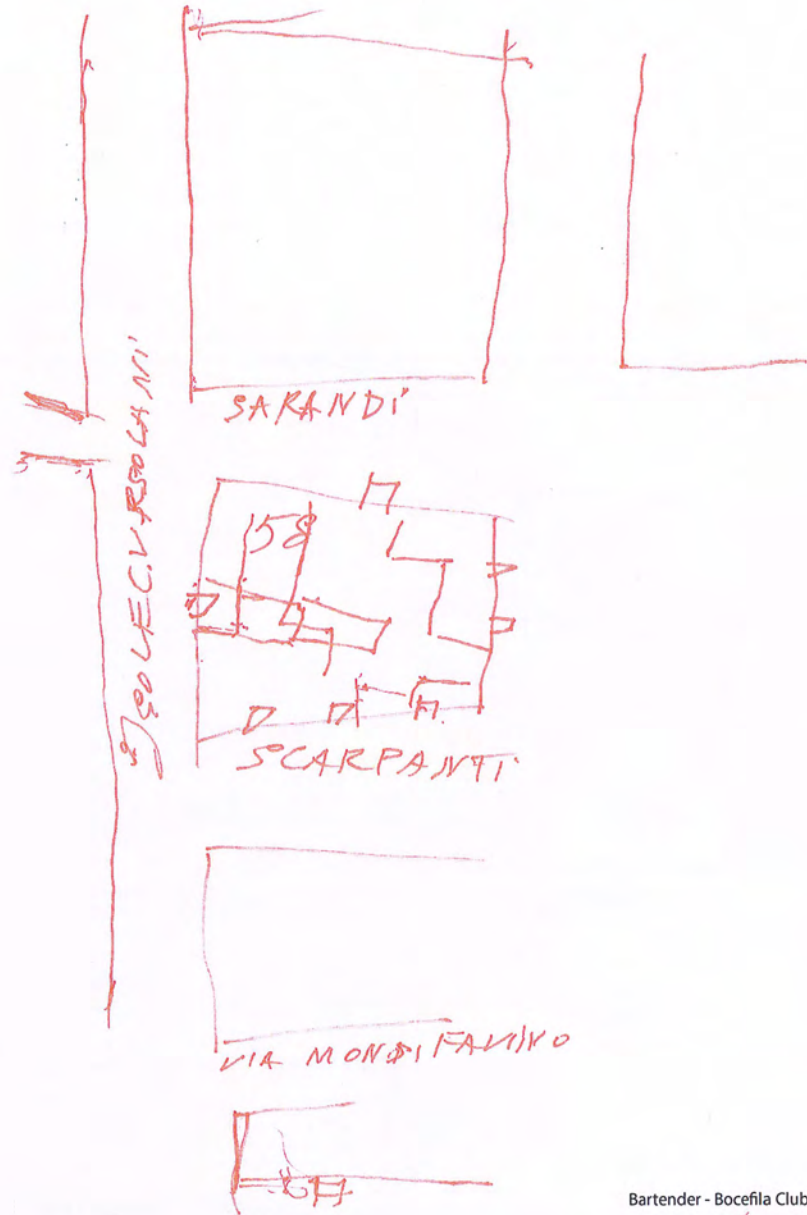


LYNCH MAPS

MAN SIMON
AT THE TABLE

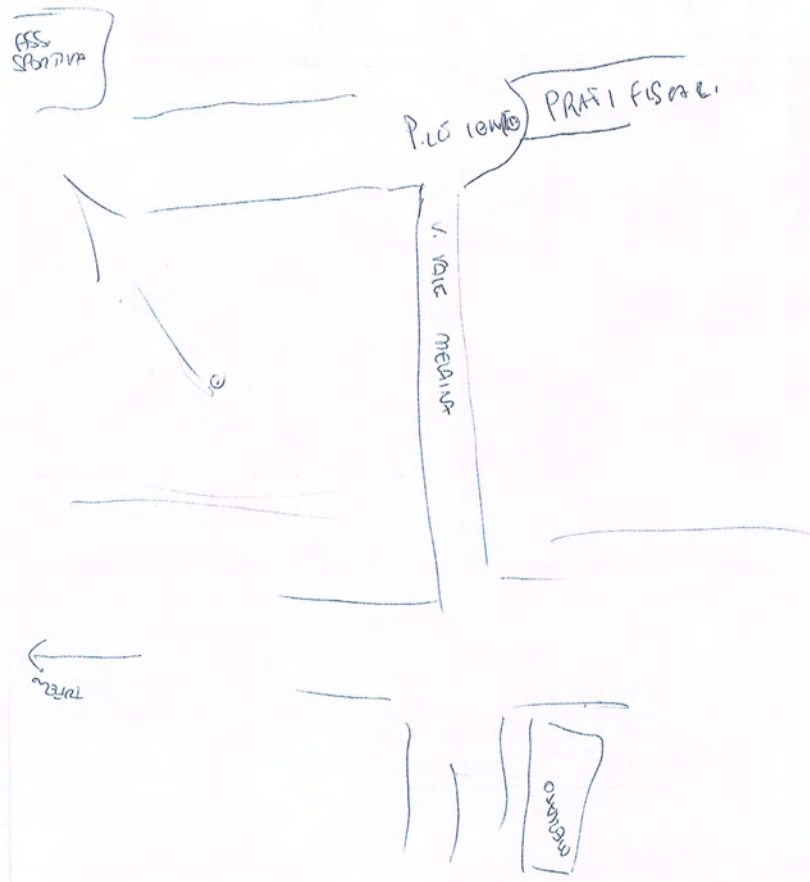


Interviewee 9 - Bocefla Club - 7.3.13



Bartender - Bocefla Club - 7.3.13

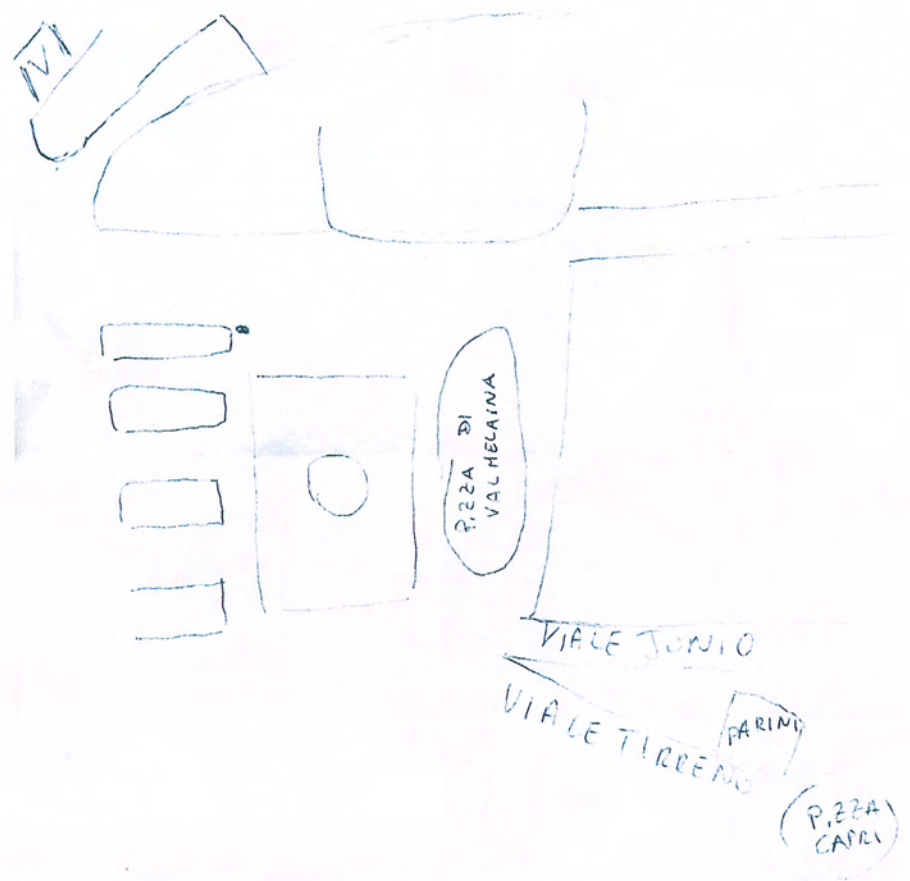
1982



Interviewee 13 - Caffè Bar - 7.3.13

1982

1982

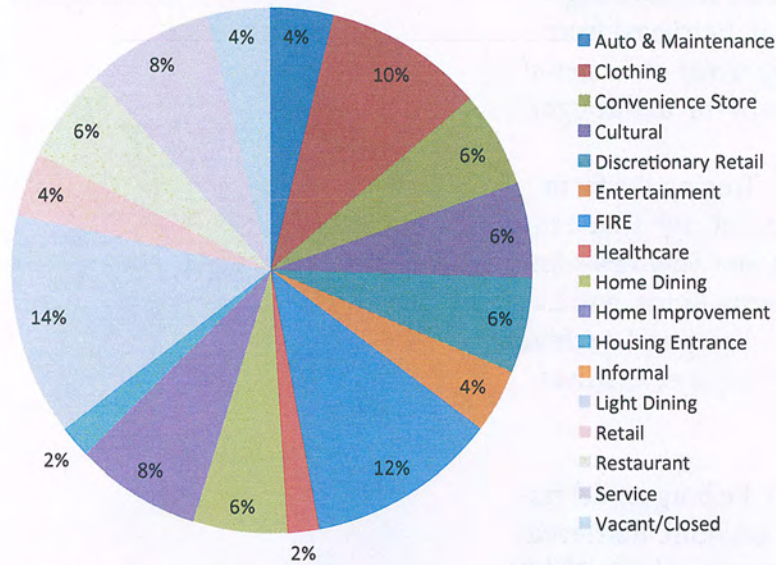


Lorena - VP Comitato di Quartieri - 14.3.13

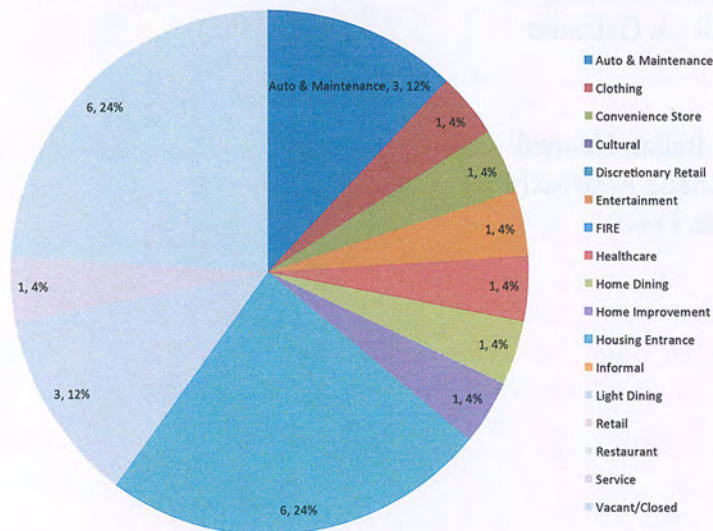
BUSINESS STATISTICS

Street front break down for commercial arteries

Via di Valle Melaina



Viale Jonio



Source:
Agenzia del
Territorio

Val Melaina Businesses & Competitiveness

Economic Sector	Count
Auto & Maintenance	8
Clothing	3
Convenience Store	5
Cultural	5
Discretionary Retail	2
Entertainment	3
FIRE	2
Healthcare	2
Home Dining	8
Home Improvement	6
Housing Entrance	18
Informal	4
Light Dining	16
Retail	10
Restaurant	2
Service	14
Vacant/Closed	42

Competitiveness	Count
Local	91
Regional	39
National	13
Global	4
N/A	66
Total	213

Source:
Street surveys

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