



# Villa Gordiani

***"Piano, Piano"*** (Step-by-Step)  
*A Neighborhood Study*

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## Abstract

Our analysis is the culmination of the Rome Workshop, a course offered in the spring of 2013 by the City and Regional Planning Department of Cornell University at its Rome campus.

While our classrooms and computers are located in the historic center of Rome, our real tools are located in the city's periphery, where we work to dissect the urban fabric of our respective *quartieri* (closest translation is 'neighborhoods').

Our team consists of Bria Francisco, Kenneth Kalynchuk, Tania Marinos and Ariel Velarde. As Cornell students (and one visiting student), familiar with the complexities of American urban issues, we are faced with the challenge of unfamiliarity. Although one member of our team speaks Italian, we are relatively new to understanding the urban issues specific to Rome and to Italy. This is a critical point to note before we begin our analysis. The particularly difficult task of understanding a Roman *quartiere* has been both illuminating and humbling. Through the course of this project we have learned to think beyond the comforts of the typical classroom setting, and have worked to integrate our studies, interests, and talents into a community we do not belong to. We have learned to think of the periphery not as peripheral, but as a central representation of Rome's urban issues: our semester's studies.





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# Introduction

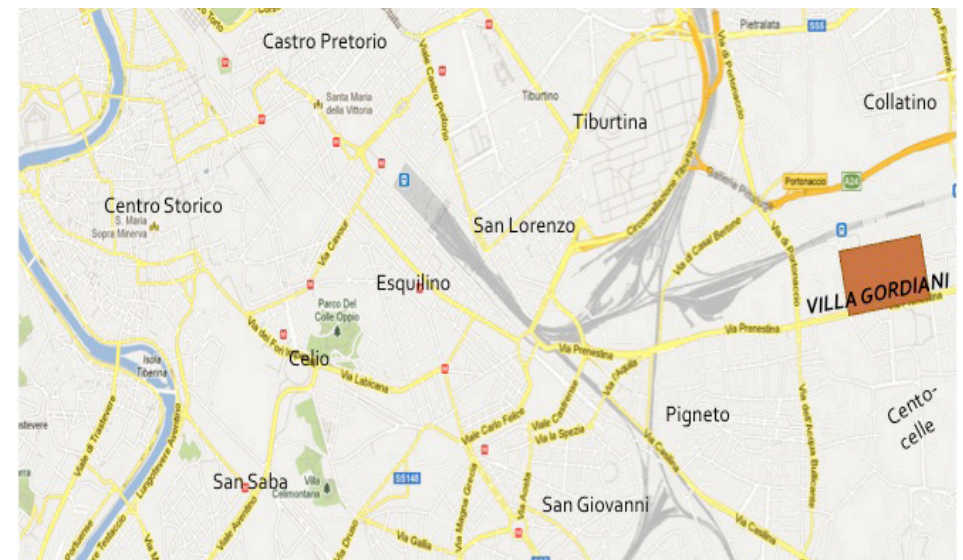
Villa Gordiani is a *quartiere* located six kilometers east of Rome's historical center is defined by its landscape of post-war social housing projects, private residential development, small commercial services and the archeological park for which the area is named. Like many of its neighbors, Villa Gordiani began as an isolated peripheral community, established to house residents displaced from the destruction of the Second World War. After years of intermittent government involvement, save public ownership, the *quartiere* has transformed into an autonomous community rich with resident-run public services.

Today, public transit connects Villa Gordiani to Rome's city center. Three tramlines to Termini station, a regional train with headways at Stazione Tiburtina, and several bus routes service the *quartiere*. Via Prenestina and Viale della Serenissima are two arterial roads that connect Villa Gordiani with other peripheral communities nearby. Since its integration into Rome's transportation networks in the 1970s, Villa Gordiani has inched closer to the city center. Today it takes about 30 minutes to travel from the *quartiere* to Termini station via public transit.

Our study area is defined by the edges of the regional rail line to the North and Via Prenestina to the South. To the east and to the west, Villa Gordiani is bordered by Viale delle Serenissima and Via Diagono D'Istria respectively. For the purposes of our study, we divided the *quartiere* into two distinct districts to analyze the growth and development of the community. The districts, our primary study area and our secondary study area, were chosen based on patterns of building typology. Our primary study area is the original social housing development built in the early 1950s. The secondary study area includes the private construction, commercial amenities and parks established in reference to the initial housing.

Nearly 60 years after the construction of Villa Gordiani, the community faces an identity crisis. Since its establishment, public transportation and the construction of communities past Villa Gordiani, have perceptually moved the *quartiere* closer to the city center. Departing from its isolated roots, new generations of residents participate in a different type of community. Disparities between the housing and services found within primary and secondary study areas also suggest a realized cultural and economic divide within the community. Despite these differences, long standing tradition may serve to reconcile Villa Gordiani as a cohesive neighborhood shaped by its history. We recount Villa Gordiani's past and analyze its present, in order to unravel the *quartiere's* complex development, to find unifying themes, and to understand its future trajectory.

## Context Map

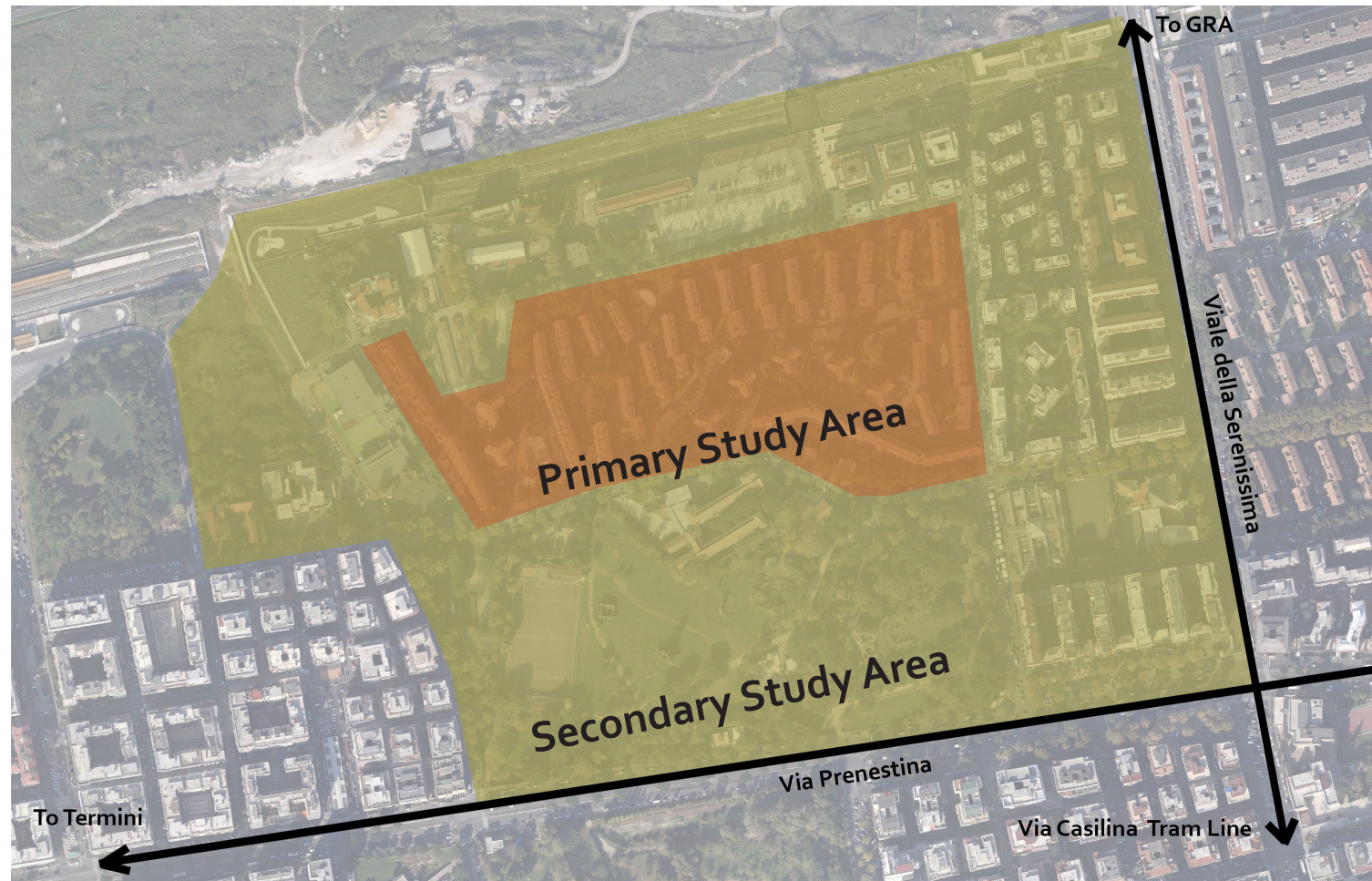


Map Source, Tania Marinos





## Study Area



Map Source, Bria Francisco

Throughout the report we refer to the primary and secondary study areas of Villa Gordiani. This distinction is critical. The primary area is comprised of the original public housing development footprint. We define the secondary area as the rest of the Villa Gordiani within the boundaries of the area we have chosen to study. We use *quartiere*, the closest Italian translation to 'neighborhood', and 'Villa Gordiani', interchangeably to refer to the combined study areas.



## Study Area



3rd Century AD

1920s

1930s

1940s

1950s

1952-55

### Establishment of **Borgata Gordiani**

Residents are removed from Rome's historical center to accommodate fascist dictator Benito Mussolini's aggressive redevelopment projects.

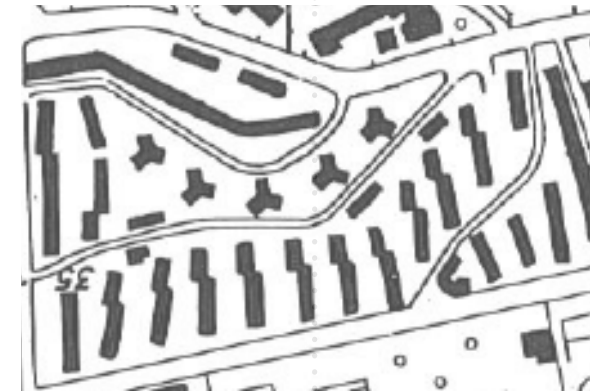
*Sfollati*, displaced residents establish themselves approximately 6 km south of the historical center of Rome in Borgata Gordiani, 1928-1930



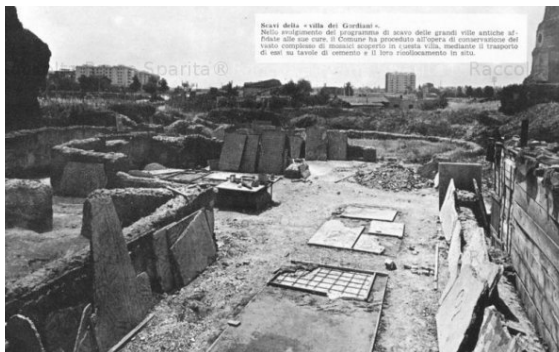
*Borgata Gordiani, made of case rapidissime and known for poor living conditions, Online photo source: Pasolini e Roma*

### Building of **Villa Gordiani**

Villa Gordiani is designed by De Renzi and Muratori and constructed in 1952-1955 and established by the Comune di Roma in phases.



*Villa Gordiani housing plan, Map source: IGM 1967*



*Parco di Villa Gordiani, Mausoleum and Basilica excavation early 1950s, Online photo source: Roma Sparita*

Land owned by the imperial family Gordiani in the 3rd century AD, most significant artifacts include the Basilica and Mausoleum which are showcased in the park today.

*Location of Borgata Gordiani in relation to the unbuilt Villa Gordiani as represented on map. Estimated rendering: 1940s Map source: Cornell in Rome Map Archive*



*Villa Gordiani under construction, estimated 1954. Photo source: Comitato di Quartiere di Villa Gordiani*  
**Mercato Villa di Gordiani established in 1950s, permanent indoor market built 1995.**



Life in early Villa Gordiani is characterized by small local services within the *case popolare*. The isolation of the *quartiere* supports its relative autonomy.



In the 1950s and 1960s residents of Villa Gordiani note hunger and lack of work as serious problems.

By the late 1960s the *quartiere*, mainly the secondary study area, has been filled in with a mixture of services, private housing, and commercial activity.



Parco Archeologico, Photo source: Tania Marinou

Parco Archeologico, excavated in early 1950s, delineated as a park in the 1960s and fenced in the 1980s

The 1970s and 1980s are Villa Gordiani's toughest years as a *quartiere*. They deal with criminality and drug problems.

Polisportiva Popolare Rome 6- Villa Gordiani, gym built in 1978

S.M.S. B. Pinelli Via Dignano D'Istria, built initially as a clinic then opened as a secondary school in 1982

Trams reach Villa Gordiani in the mid 1970s



Tram on Via Prenestina, Photo source: Comitato di Quartiere Villa Gordiani



Comitato di Quartiere, Photo source: Ariel Velarde  
Comitato di Quartiere, occupied and established in 2008



The Villa Gordiani that we know today, Map source: Bria Francisco



Parocchia S. Maria Addolorata a Villa Gordiani, Photo source Ariel Velarde

Parocchia S. Maria Addolorata a Villa Gordiani, church established in an old cinema in 1953 and renovated for the Jubilee in 2001

# Historical Context

# Historical Context

Villa Gordiani is a *quartiere* whose history greatly informs the community that we see today. This history is evident in both the physical and cultural constructions of this *quartiere* and therefore commands a significant portion of our neighborhood analysis. The landscape of Villa Gordiani is marked with archaeological sites, calculated housing developments and streets whose residential and commercial exteriors are a narrative of years past. Many residents of Villa Gordiani maintain a tradition of pride and local autonomy by recounting the discernible history of their *quartiere* in any number of social settings.

Our interviews are great sources of historical information because many of the residents have lived in the *quartiere* for their whole life. Much of this record comes from local history, mainly from our associates at the *Comitato di Quartiere*. While this collective local knowledge is valuable, it is often hard to support with documentary evidence. To address this consideration, we will note when our analysis is characterized by local history. The ease with which we can trace Villa Gordiani's history makes it pivotal to our analysis of the *quartiere* we know today.



Photo Source, Tania Marinos

## Early Villa Gordiani

During the 4th century AD, Villa Gordiani was home to the imperial family Gordiani from which the *quartiere* gets its name (Roma Capitale, 2013). The most enduring legacy of this era is the series of archaeological landmarks whose remains ornament Villa Gordiani's park. The mausoleum and basilica were discovered in the early 1950s when excavation for the Villa Gordiani public housing project began, and have been landmarks in the neighborhood ever since (Roma 6 Villa Gordiani, 2013).



Photo Source, Comitato di Quartiere di Villa Gordiani



## Borgata Gordiani

Borgata Gordiani was an establishment of dense, self-built housing founded in the early 1930s as the result of Benito Mussolini's abusive redevelopment projects in Central Rome. With Mussolini's realization of Via dell'Impero and Via del Mare, tens of thousands of Romans were forced out of their homes and far into the South Eastern periphery of the city. They established Borgata Gordiani almost immediately after Borgata Prenestina, located just south of via Prenestina, to accommodate a growing number of homeless Romans (Strappa, 2012).

These *sfollati*, or displaced residents, set themselves up in hastily built brick barracks called *case rapidissime*. Living conditions were infamously poor as the result of lacking governmental funds and services, marking Borgata Gordiani as truly peripheral to the Roman metropolis and consciousness. The borgate were considered a source of Roman shame, known for their inferior construction, sanitary conditions and poverty. Giuseppe Strappa's "Studi sulla periferia est di Roma" (2012) writes at length on the state of life in Borgata Gordiani, noting leaky roofs, an overwhelming deficiency of running water, and a drastic isolation from the rest of the Roman metropolis. Borgata Gordiani's mostly one-story houses were ill-equipped to deal with the needs of its 5000 or so residents. With only the principal road paved, Borgata Gordiani was difficult to access and to leave.

Strappa (2012) notes that at the root of the problem was the reality that neither the city nor the citizens took possession of Borgata Gordiani, highlighting the dominant theme of peripheral neglect.

The Borgata Gordiani was finally demolished in the 1980s as a result of progressive post-war planning. This progress was supported by the development of numerous ambitious public housing projects in the 1950s, one impressive example of which was the Villa Gordiani housing project.



*Location of Borgata Gordiani in relation to the unbuilt Villa Gordiani as represented on map. Estimated rendering: 1940s  
Map Source, Cornell in Rome Map Archive*





**Villa Gordiani under construction, estimated 1954**

Photo Source, Comitato di Quartiere di Villa Gordiani

Villa Gordiani was public housing complex conceptualized and designed by Mario De Renzi and Saverio Muratori in association with the Ufficio Tecnico Comune di Roma. Some sources note that this integrated community was built under the management of INA-Casa, known for architectural excellence in post World War II public housing. It was built in phases between the years of 1952-1955, starting with the initial lengthy row house on the westernmost point of the quartiere. The housing design is strongly based on a combination of De Renzi and Muratori's eight-story star towers and four-story staggered row housing. This arrangement is similar to that of public housing in Tuscolano and Valco San Paolo. After the archaeological landmarks (which were discovered during the excavation for the housing) the *case popolari* were the most distinct physical feature of the *quartiere* for years. The housing was built along Viale della Venezia Giulia just beyond via Prenestina and the *parco archeologico*. It was surrounded in large part by countryside. Local history, as recounted by our associates at the *Comitato di Quartiere* tells a similar story in which "*Non c'era niente*", or, "There was nothing". Villa Gordiani is an example of leapfrog development, meaning that it was remotely positioned with little attention to accessibility and continuity within the previously existing urban fabric. The housing dominates our primary study area for this reason, the development of the *quartiere* was based around the housing and happened over the course of sixty years.

The Villa Gordiani housing was poorly serviced with little access to the center of Rome. The trams along Via Prenestina, the mode of transport which was noted to be most convenient for current residents, did not reach as far east as Villa Gordiani until the mid 1970s. The housing and the single-story storefronts were the nucleus of the neighborhood. The services of early Villa Gordiani were localized. Interviews with locals reveal that they included small food stands, an *osteria*, a bar, a *fornaio*, an *emporio*, two *tabacchi* and a convent. While initially there was no greenery to be seen within the housing complex, it was completely surrounded by farmland and countryside. The park was said to house grazing sheep and the greenery between the housing in the small *palazzi* was beginning to be maintained by the city.

It is in these early years that we see a distinct shift towards a sense of ownership and pride in Villa Gordiani. Still physically and culturally marginalized, the residents of Villa Gordiani adapt to life in the periphery. The residents include some *sfollati* from the initial Borgata Gordiani across Via Prenestina but were comprised mostly of Romans who lost their homes to bombings across Rome.

## "Non c'era niente"

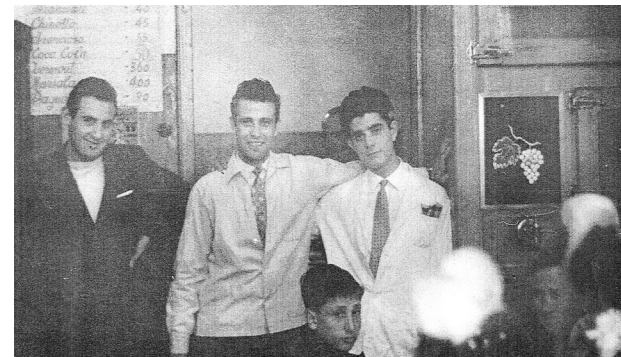


Photo Source, Comitato di Quartiere di Villa Gordiani



The rest of the *sfollati* from Borgata Gordiani are said to have moved along Via Tiburtina (Villani, 2012). Our sources at the Comitato di Quartiere consider the initial population of Villa Gordiani diverse in terms of Italian regional origins and occupations.

The Villa Gordiani housing built between 1952-1955 was initially intended to house 12,000 inhabitants in 2,000 apartments. Interviews reveal that as the housing was being built, residents began to move in without authorization making it difficult to gauge just how many people lived there. This uncertainty guarantees statistical inaccuracies even today. Inside the buildings the residents were poorly equipped due to lack of funding. The construction began in phases from west to east (from the center outwards) and the further east they proceeded the smaller the apartments became. The Comitato di Quartiere tells us that the residents renovated the interiors of the apartments with such vigor that they became unrecognizable. In the eight-story star towers, many residents were unable to navigate by stairs so approximately eight years after the initial housing was built, elevators were retrofitted into the towers by the local public housing authority. Residents say that not much has been done since then in the way of maintenance of the *case popolari* by any type of authority. Public maintenance of the greenery ended abruptly and without explanation soon thereafter so the residents absorbed that responsibility.

By the late 1960s the *quartiere*, mainly the secondary study area, had been filled in with a mixture of services, developer-built private housing, and commercial activity. In the 1950s and 60s residents noted hunger and lack of work as the main problems of their community. The 1970s and 80s were the years in which drugs and criminality took control. Locals recount these years as some of the most difficult and least livable in this *quartiere's* history.

It should be noted that the years between the 1980s and today are greatly lacking in official historical information. Through a combination of local interviews and a timeline of services, we are painted two very different pictures of these years. Locals say that they have been experiencing a thirty-year period of abandonment in which the city of Rome has ignored them. Denying elevators for the four-story housing, losing governmental maintenance of the green spaces, and ignoring the general needs of the housing residents are all symptoms of this abandonment, residents say.



Photo Source, Tania Marinos



Our interviews, field work, and research tell a different story. The services which distinguish Villa Gordiani as a well-served *quartiere* were established in these years of abandonment, mostly within the secondary study area. Between the 1980s and today our secondary study area has seen great improvements. These include:

- Mercato Villa di Gordiani, established informally in the 1950s and formally in the 1995 with the permanent structure
- Parco Archeologico, excavated in early 1950s, delineated as a park in the 1960s and fenced in the 1980s
- Trams, reach Villa Gordiani in the mid 1970s
- Polisportiva Popolare Rome 6- Villa Gordiani, built in 1978
- S.M.S. B. Pinelli Via Dignano D'Istria, built initially as a clinic then opened as a secondary school in 1982
- Parocchia S. Maria Addolorata a Villa Gordiani, church established in an old cinema in 1953 and extended for the Millennial Jubilee in 2000, completed in 2001
- Comitato di Quartiere, occupied and established in 2008

The more recent history of Villa Gordiani as a *quartiere* unravels some of the complex relationship between our primary and secondary study areas. We observed that international immigration has brought some residents from Eastern Europe, Bangladesh, and China into the *quartiere* but the almost guaranteed permanence of the *case popolare* isolates them to the secondary study area. We explore the impacts of this with greater depth in our thematic section.



Photo source, Tania Marinos





## Historical Context Methodology

Our analysis of Villa Gordiani is based strongly in its rich history and the way that it manifests itself in the *quartiere* we know today. Much of our history comes from interviews with local residents in the primary study area, mainly the *Comitato di Quartiere*, the principal of the B. Pinelli Secondary School, and the president of the local market. We developed a strong relationship with members of the *Comitato di Quartiere* who work to serve the residents of the *case popolari* and archive this history. Villa Gordiani's establishment as a legacy of the Borgata Gordiani helps us document this history because it is relatively well documented. Academics, poets, filmmakers and the like have all given great thought to the Borgate of Rome, Borgata Gordiani included. Online research gave us access to many of these sources, aiding to fill in some gaps that our knowledge of local history created.

There were specific challenges to the way that this historical context developed. Firstly, local history is collective and is not always supported by documentary evidence. The valuable local history that we get from our interviews speaks disproportionately to the primary study area. Understandably, many of the older residents of the *quartiere* live in the *case popolari* and maintain a tradition of historical storytelling. That being said we had to consider this with every narrative we heard. Another challenge was

the access to information on more recent developments within the secondary study area of Villa Gordiani. We addressed this discrepancy by using aerial maps from 1967, and by creating a timeline of the services established during those years.



*Villa Gordiani housing plan*

Map source: IGM 1967



Photo Source, Comitato di Quartiere di Villa Gordiani



# Quantitative Analysis

## Demographics & Statistics

### Methodology

We approached the quantitative analysis of Villa Gordiani by using consistent data provided by Italy's National Institute for Statistics, ISTAT, from 2001. We face challenges in using this data because of its uncertainty today, having been collected twelve years ago. However, after triangulation of data sources we concluded that the 2001 ISTAT data provides insight into Villa Gordiani's residents. From these statistics we can investigate historic and demographic trends as they play out in aggregate numbers on the census tract, or block-by-block scale.

After choosing census tracts that most closely fit Villa Gordiani's assigned borders, we used ArcGIS to dissect information available at the physical level. We translated each field name of the data available through GIS, aided by our teaching assistants, and then picked out the most relevant and clear

information for the themes of our analysis. We divided the data into themes of: General Demographics, Family, Employment, Immigration, and Housing. We then used basic algebraic calculations to derive trends across groupings of the census tracts when compared to the *quartiere* as a whole. To realize broader trends of similarity and variation, we made comparisons between the primary and secondary areas, and between Villa Gordiani and the city of Rome. We found that similarities exist on multiple data platforms between Rome and Villa Gordiani. However, there were many strong discrepancies between the primary and secondary areas that support the disconnect between the two areas and the idea of government abandonment leading to resident agency.



Photo source, Tania Marinos



## Quantitative Analysis





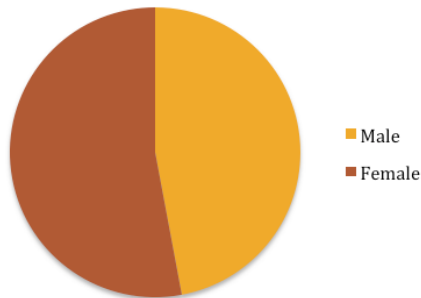
## General Demographics

Villa Gordiani's population is 5,328, with 1,943 (36% of the total) residing in the primary area and 3,385 (64% of the total) residing in the secondary area [Table 1.1]. Of these residents, 47% are female and 53% are male, representative of the proportion found in the City of Rome [Table 1.2, Chart 1.1]. The female population is much higher in the primary area than in the secondary, however, with the gap between males and females there reaching 8% [Graph 1].

Gender Breakdown		
	Male	Female
Primary Area	45.8%	54.2%
Secondary Area	47.8%	52.2%
Villa Gordiani	47.1%	52.9%
Rome	47.1%	52.9%

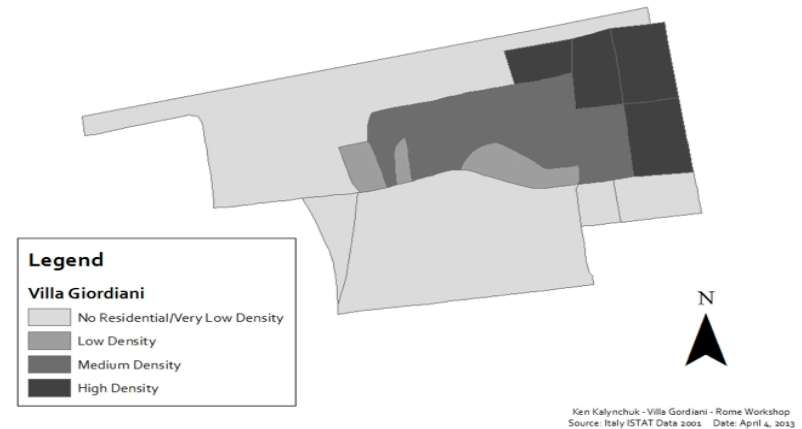
*Table 1.2 – Gender as percentage of the whole for each study area, Villa Gordiani, and Rome*

### VILLA GORDIANI BY GENDER



*Chart 1.2 – Representation of Villa Gordiani's age distribution*

### Villa Gordiani Density



*GIS Map 1.1 – Physical representation of density, calculated by tract population over tract area*

The residential density [GIS Map 1.1] of Villa Gordiani strengthens our evaluation of building and street typologies. Calculations made using ArcGIS suggest Villa Gordiani's highest density is located in the census tracts of mixed-use private housing and the second phase of public housing found in the secondary study area. Medium density tracts make up the primary area and a block in the secondary area, all of which have ample open, grassy areas between the multi-story buildings. The sections labeled Low Density are also part of the primary area, each with extra green, open spaces and some commercial units on the tract. The 'No Residential/Low Density' census tracts include the industrial block that has one residential building the park tracts.



## VILLA GORDIANI AGE DISTRIBUTION

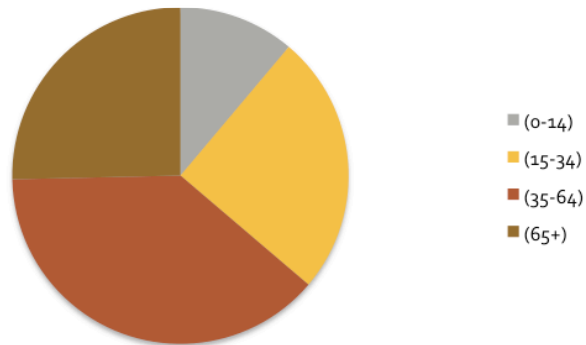


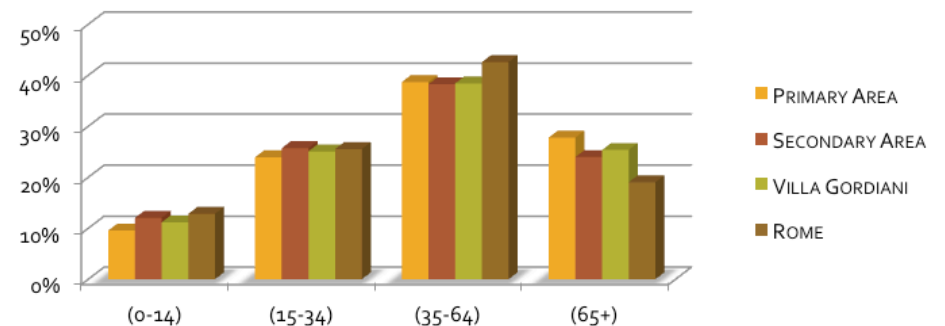
Chart 1.2 – Representation of Villa Gordiani's age distribution

The age distribution statistics support history as told through interviews as well. Villa Gordiani's age distribution data show it to be a *quartiere* with a population of older residents when compared with Rome [Table 1.4]. This becomes particularly evident in the primary area, supporting a narrative of long tenure by original residents of the development and a lack of access to outsiders to this public housing. For the clearest understanding of the age demographics belonging to the *quartiere*, we split the five-year census collection groups into the larger themes of youth (ages 0-14), young adult (15-34), middle age adult (35-64), and senior residents (65+) [Graph 1.3].

Through this collection of groups, gaps between the primary and secondary areas become apparent. A 2.5% difference between residents in the youth category, combined with a 4% gap between senior residents, suggests that the primary area has fewer families with young children, and has maintained a large proportion of its original residents (in the senior residents category). The secondary area also has a younger population because it was built later.

Villa Gordiani shows a strong senior resident population, at 25% when compared with Rome's 19% in this category. Villa Gordiani, however, compares with smaller proportions in the three other categories, particularly with a 4% lower proportion of middle age residents in the *quartiere* and 2% lower proportion in the youth category. Collectively, these statistics suggest a significantly large presence of elderly residents born before World War II in Villa Gordiani. Rome, in comparison, has a larger middle age population and more youth than in the *quartiere*.

## VILLA GORDIANI AGE DISTRIBUTION



Graph 1.3 – Visual representation of differences in age groups as percentage of area populations

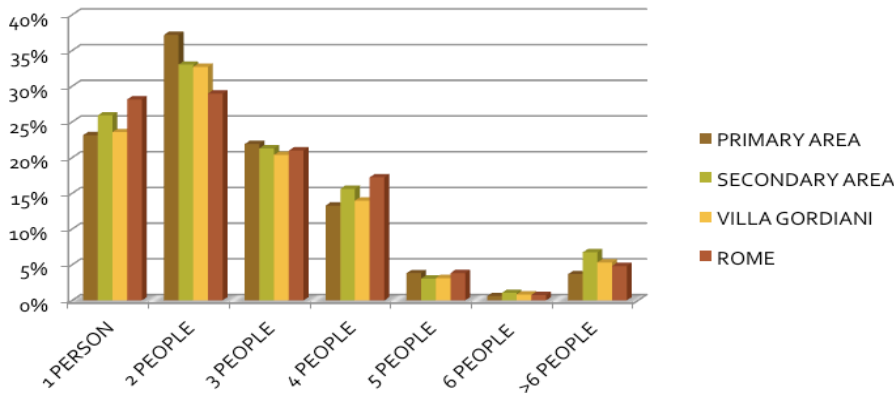




# Family

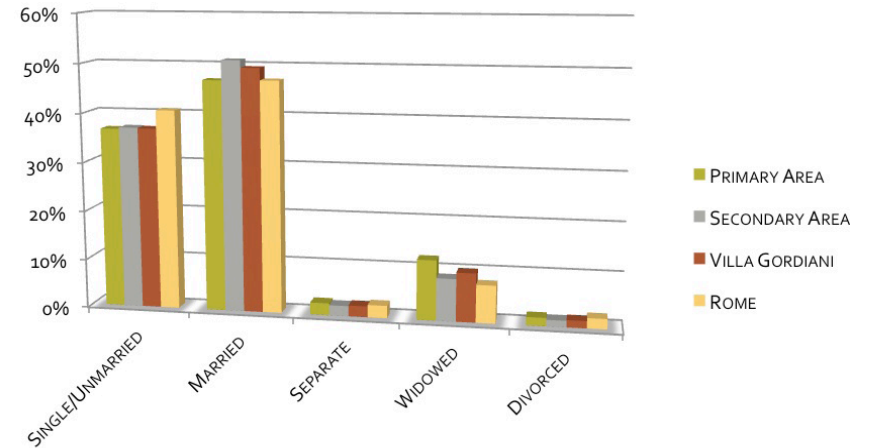
Family size in Villa Gordiani is numerically the same as Rome, with 2.4 people per family in each study area. Within Villa Gordiani, there are some discrepancies between the primary and secondary areas, that are tied to the older population of Villa Gordiani. The most notable difference in family size data was the 8% comparative difference in two-family households in Villa Gordiani's primary area next to Rome's proportion of two-family households. Villa Gordiani has the higher proportion, with 37% of their households being two people [Graph 2.1, Table 2.1]. Also notable was the primary area's low percentage of four person households and greater when compared to Rome and the secondary area. The secondary area is more consistent with Rome's family size data than the primary area.

**FAMILY SIZE AS A PERCENT OF AREA**



*Graph 2.1 – Visual representation of comparative family size, by area*

**RELATIONSHIP STATUS**



*Graph 2.2 – Visual representation of residents' relationship status, by area*

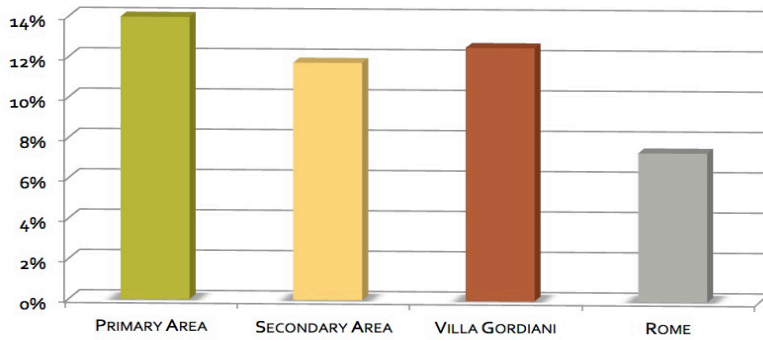
The ISTAT data also provides a view into the relationship statuses of Villa Gordiani residents. Through information on what percentage of residents are single, married, separated, widowed, or divorced, [Table 2.2, Graph 2.2] we found that Villa Gordiani residents have higher marriage and widow rates than Rome, and lower single/unmarried rates. These differences can be attributed to the older population of the *quartiere*.



# Employment

The matter of employment is heavily detailed in the ISTAT data. A 12.5% unemployment rate in Villa Gordiani when compared with Rome's 7% unemployment rate continues a trend of large unemployment in the *quartiere* – which, according to the Comitato, was present at the outset of the development [Graph 3.1]. Strikingly, the unemployment rate in the primary area (14%) is 2% higher than the secondary area (12%). This difference is notably high given that 10% less of Villa Gordiani's population is considered a part of the workforce than Rome's population [Graph 3.2]. Furthermore, employment data shows that while women represent only 42% of Villa Gordiani's workforce, they represent 48% of the unemployed for the *quartiere*. This statistic, although unexplainable through the data, matches a common trend for Rome, where there are 2% more females unemployed (8%), proportionally, than the unemployed males in the city's workforce (6%) [Chart 3.1, Chart 3.2].

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE 2001



Graph 3.1 – Visual representation of unemployment rate of workforce, by area

VILLA GORDIANI WORKFORCE

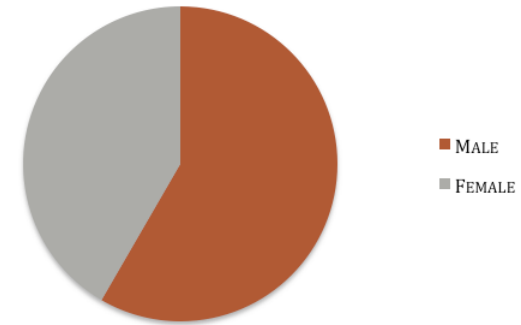


Chart 3.1 – Representation of gender composition in the workforce

UNEMPLOYED VILLA GORDIANI

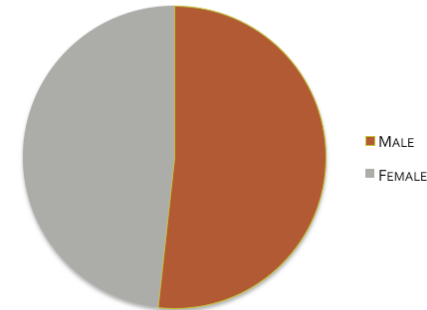


Chart 3.2 – Visual representation of males and females as percentages of the unemployed workforce residing in Villa Gordiani

## Quantitative Analysis



## Education Attainment

Education attainment data for Villa Gordiani demonstrates a less-educated population (when compared to all Romans), gaps between male and female education attainment, and gaps between the primary and secondary areas. There is missing data that accounts for around 5% of the population, which has not lived in the *quartiere* for more than 6 years. 5% of Villa Gordiani's population have obtained a University Degree or Diploma, 23% have completed secondary school, and 31% have only completed the level required for Italians by the government, middle school. This places Villa Gordiani with a total of 58% of the population with at least the legally required minimum standards for education achievement, comparing poorly to Rome's 71% rate [Table 4.1, Table 4.2]. The *quartiere* has 37% of its population with less than the required education. When you subtract the percentage of current school age youth, as demonstrated in the General Demographics section, we find that at least 20% of the adult population has not completed middle school, the benchmark for education in Italian schools.

	Required Education and Beyond	Less than Required Education
Primary Area	56%	40.1%
Secondary Area	59.9%	35.2%
Villa Gordiani	58.4%	37%
Rome	71.1%	23.8%

Table 4.2 – Education attainment of residents in relation to expected attainment level, middle school and above, by area

### EDUCATION ATTAINMENT BY VILLA GORDIANI RESIDENTS

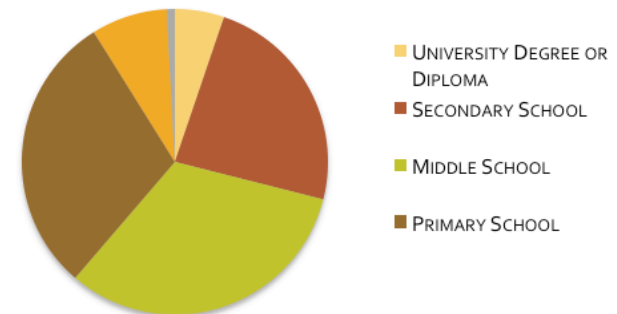
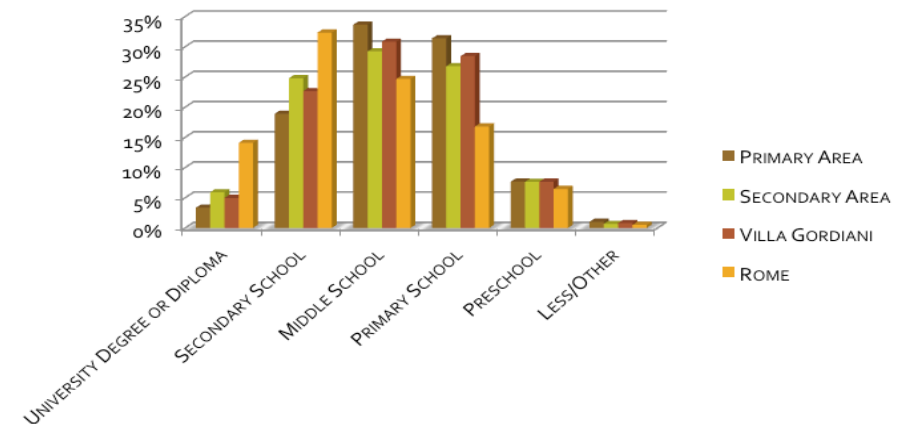


Chart 4.1 – Proportional representation of residents' education attainment levels

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN VILLA GORDIANI



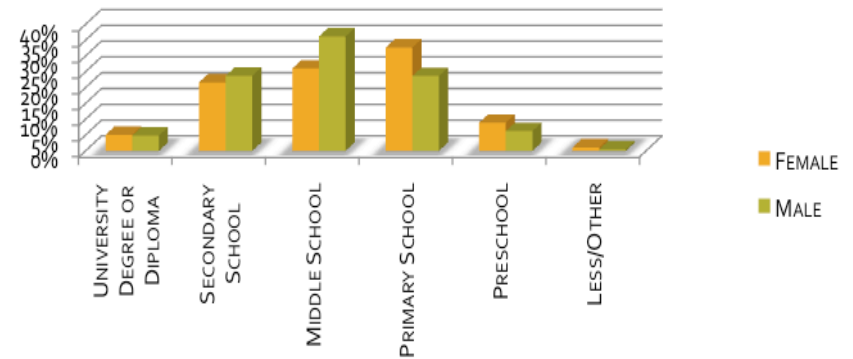
Graph 4.2 - Comparative education attainment levels, by gender



Within Villa Gordiani, the secondary area has 3% more of its population with a university degree or diploma than the primary area, as well as 6% more of the population with a secondary degree. In older communities elderly women are more likely than men not to have completed obligatory education, but in younger communities women are instead more likely to have completed university education. Subsequently, the primary area has larger proportions in the 'Less Than Required Education' category.

Women in Villa Gordiani are less educated than men, with 43% of their demographic having completed less than the required education level [Table 4.3, Table 4.4], compared to men's 31% in the category [Table 4.5, Table 4.6]. Surprisingly, 0.4% more women in the *quartiere* have completed a University Degree or Diploma. When compared to Rome's population, Villa Gordiani women have lower overall academic attainment than Rome's women, with a gap of 16% in reaching secondary school or beyond - beneath Rome's 69% rate. The gap with the same calculation for men is only 9%, suggesting that not only are men in Villa Gordiani more educated than women, but also they are closer to the citywide level of education, at 74%, than women are to theirs.

### EDUCATION BY GENDER



Graph 4.2 - Comparative education attainment levels, by gender

Female	Required Education and Beyond	Less than Required Education
Villa Gordiani	52.9%	42.7%
Rome	68.6%	26.7%

Table 4.4 – Female education attainment level in relation to expected attainment level, middle school and above, by area

Male	Beyond Required Education	Less than Required Education
Villa Gordiani	64.7%	30.5%
Rome	74%	20.4%

Table 4.6 – Male education attainment level in relation to expected attainment level, middle school and above, by area

# Immigration

Immigration was a consistent theme in several of our interviews, heeding a necessary look into ISTAT data on the subject. Translations and the grouping of this data made the groups appear to be immigrant numbers because the categories are by continent and not a color, race or region. However it is possible these categories were formed using nationality of ancestors as the actual data collected, in a racial sense, as opposed to this data being immigrants of the first generation and their children. Under the premise that this data is in fact detailing immigrants and their origin, we made connections between this data and immigrant information we discovered in interviews. Through this data we found that 3.8% of Villa Gordiani residents are immigrants, which compares closely to 3.9% immigrant resident rate in the city of Rome. 66% of immigrants in Villa Gordiani are Asian (which includes the Middle East), 16% are European, 12% are African, and 6% are American [Chart 5.1]. The proportion of Asian immigrants in the *quartiere* is very large compared to Rome, where 28.73% of immigrants are Asian. Villa Gordiani has small populations of European, African, and American immigrants compared to Rome, which have rates at 40%, 15%, and 17% respectively [Graph 5.1, Chart 5.2]. Being outdated by twelve years, this data reflects the breakdown of immigrant groups we observed, but does not agree with the more recent of immigrants to Rome and Villa Gordiani that we have learned about.

Immigrant Breakdown		
	Villa Gordiani	ROME
Asian Foreigners	66.0%	28.7%
European Foreigners	15.8%	39.8%
African Foreigners	12.3%	14.5%
American Foreigners	5.9%	16.5%

Table 5.1 – Percentage of immigrant population grouped by origin, by area

## VILLA GORDIANI IMMIGRANT ORIGINS

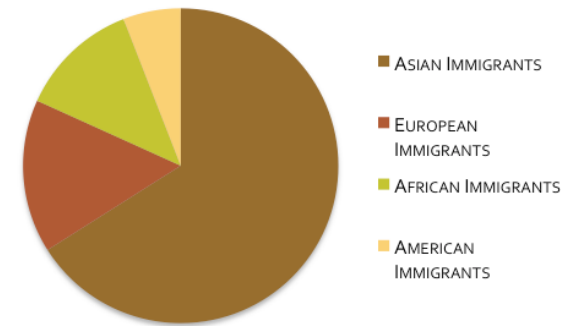


Chart 5.1 – Representation of Villa Gordiani’s immigrants by origin

## ROME IMMIGRANT ORIGINS

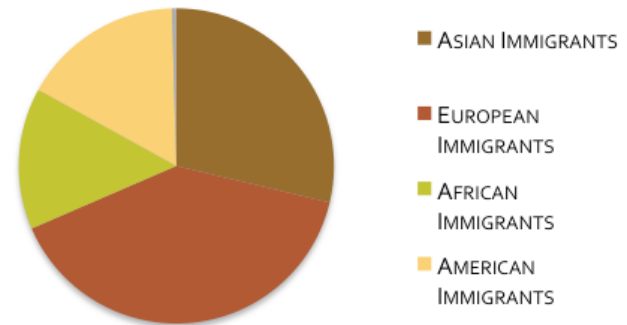


Chart 5.2 – Representation of Rome’s immigrants by origin





There is a large discrepancy of immigrants as percentage of population between the primary and secondary areas. Less than 1% of the primary area's population is immigrants, while the secondary area is over 8% immigrant [Graph 5.2]. This places 95% of all immigrants in Villa Gordiani in the secondary area [Chart 5.3]. The concentration of immigrants is shown drastically in [GIS Map 5.2], where over 60% of Villa Gordiani's immigrants area shown to live in one census tract. In the densest tract, 15% of the residents are immigrants [GIS Map 5.1], mostly of Asian origin. Overall, the ISTAT data shows that the immigrant makeup of Villa Gordiani is similar in some ways to the city of Rome, yet display large differences amongst the primary and secondary study areas, as well as through the composition of various immigrant groups.

### WHERE IMMIGRANTS IN VILLA GORDIANI LIVE

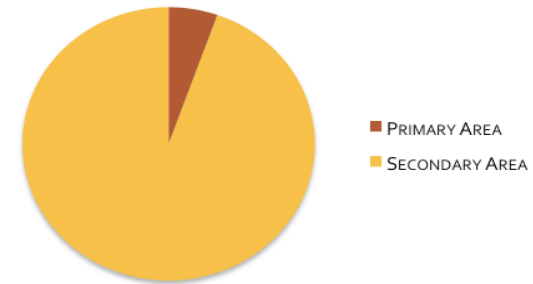
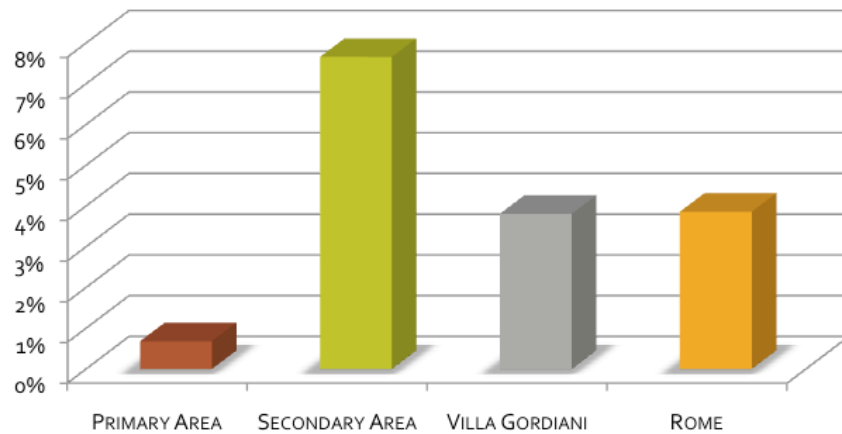


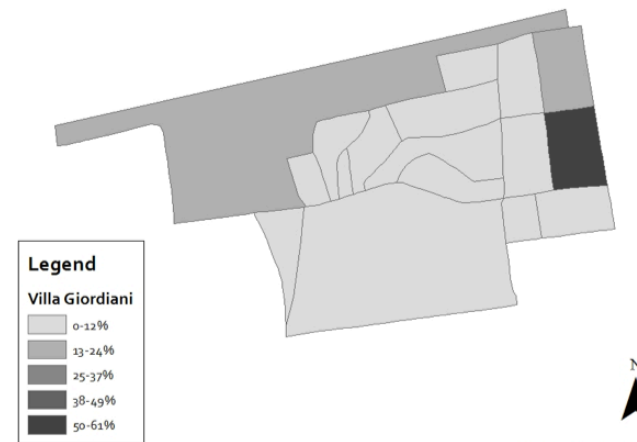
Chart 5.3 – Representation of study area where immigrants live

### IMMIGRANTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS



Graph 5.2 – Visual representation of immigrants as percent of residents in an area

### QUANTITY OF IMMIGRANTS BY CENSUS TRACT



GIS Map 5.2 – Physical representation of the percentage of Villa Gordiani's immigrant population, by tract



## Quantitative Analysis

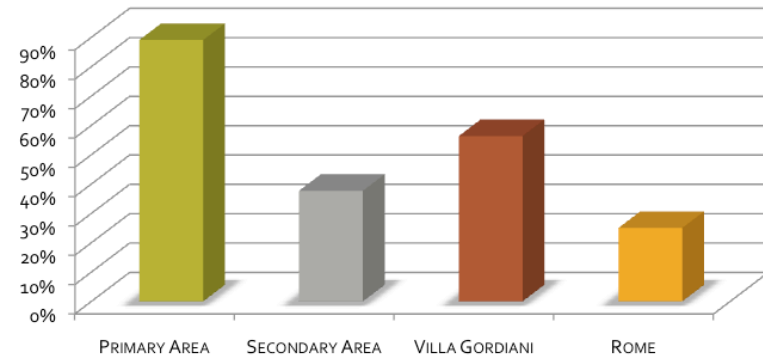


## Housing

The data for housing in Villa Gordiani follows the information learned from interviews and research on history of the neighborhood. Representation of our data [Chart 6.1] shows that the majority of housing was built in the post-war period from 1946 to 1961, with subsequent development following the decade of 1962-1971. The buildings in census tracts within the primary study area were all built within the post-war period, while more varied building age occurs in the tracts from the secondary area.

A larger story regarding housing data is the discrepancy in rental vs. ownership of housing between the primary and secondary study areas [Graph 6.1]. Compared to the rental rate of Rome, which is 25%, Villa Gordiani's rate as a whole is 56%, more than double the city rate. The secondary study area, which is mostly private housing but also contains two blocks of public housing, has a 38% rental rate. The primary area has a very large rental rate at 89%. These statistics fit the *quartiere's* narrative of the original Villa Gordiani development being a public housing development where very few units have been purchased from the government over the past 20+ years. The secondary area data also matches the amount of units built in developer-built complexes compared with units built as public housing that we learned about from observations, interviews, and through the *Comitato*.

### TOTAL RENTAL UNITS



Graph 6.1 – Visual representation of percent of units that are public rental

### BUILDING CONSTRUCTION IN VILLA GORDIANI

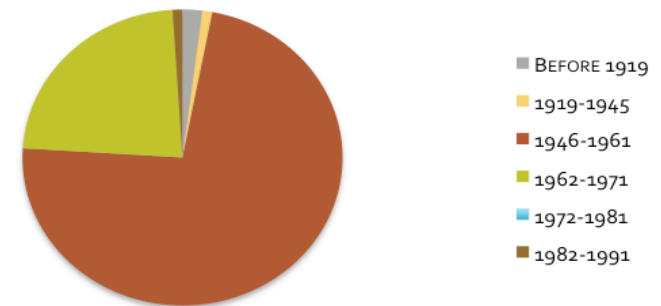


Chart 6.1 – Representation of Villa Gordiani's building ages, by time period built



# Qualitative Analysis

## Land Use Map

### Introduction

Our land use map illustrates the various land uses across our study area. It depicts a clear distinction between residential housing and mixed-use buildings, concurrent with the divide of our primary and secondary study areas. Note that public services and the green or civic spaces of Villa Gordiani are located primarily within our secondary area.

### Methodology

We began the process of locating and recording land use throughout Villa Gordiani by first walking through the entire *quartiere*. After this initial visit, we then created a map of the neighborhood from Google Earth and divided the *quartiere* into zones. To maintain a similar set of survey standards and goals, we began by recording one of the zones together.

From this map and survey we compiled the data to denote clusters of each type of land use. To maximize accuracy, we walked down every street in the initial study area, taking photographs and notes. The final map was created in AutoCAD with an extracted map from GoogleMaps.

## Land Use Visual Legend

### Residential

Our study area includes public and private housing. The residential land use within the primary study area is the public housing built in 1952. The buildings range in height from four-stories to nine-stories tall.

### Commercial

Single story ground floor buildings make up the commercial space within the primary study area. Most of the properties no longer function as commercial or retail but are instead occupied spaces that provide

### Mixed (Residential-Commercial)

Ground floor retail with five-story to nine-story residential units located above. Found in secondary study area.

### Industrial

Concentrated to the North of the study area. The fenced in area is primarily rail service buildings. Government storage buildings also located on the land.

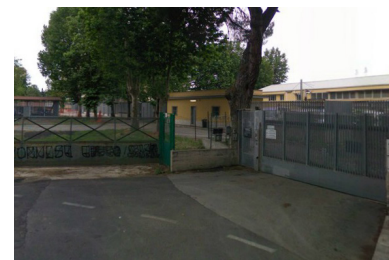


Photo Source (All), Tania Marinos





## Land Use Visual Legend



### Public Services

These lots are dispersed across the entire study area and located primarily in the secondary study area. Public services provided to the community are four schools, two churches and five recreational buildings.



### Green/Civic Space

There are three major green spaces and one central civic space. These areas include: Parco dei Gordiani, a green space to the west of central public housing, a soccer field between the church and the market, and a civic space within the primary study area.

*Photo Source (All), Tania Marinos*



*Photo Source, Tania Marinos*

## Land Use Map



*Map Source, Bria Francisco*

## Analysis

Villa Gordiani's divided land use is a result of "oil stain development," the spread of housing, services, and commercial buildings after the construction of the original public housing. While land uses in the primary area appear meticulously planned, land use in the secondary area seems driven by many forces over time. Our land use map demonstrates the expansions that encircle the concentration of public housing units that define our primary study area.

## Qualitative Analysis



# Street Typology

## Introduction

Villa Gordiani's streets can be classified by their size and function. Our street typology map serves to recognize the different types of paths, streets and consular roads that run within our study area. These graphic illustrates the various street types found in the study area.

## Methodology

A street survey, which can be found in the appendix, of Villa Gordiani was implemented on a street-by-street basis. The general data collection method began with the recording of quantitative and qualitative details on the green space, street layout, and usage of each street. This information was then compiled into a single spreadsheet. The streets were then subdivided into six main classifications: 1) Four-lane roads, 2) Two-lane roads, 3) One-lane streets, and 4) Paved pedestrian, 5) Unpaved pedestrian, and 6) Bike Lane.

The recording of quantitative and qualitative data concentrated on a range of features. Streets were classified based on the physical number of lanes and traffic flow to determine a classification for street type. Design features such as greenery, vegetation and lighting of the streets were noted. We identified vehicle parking (illegal or legal) as important factors distinguishing street types. We recorded qualitative descriptions of the maintenance of sidewalks and their width were recorded, and observed their pedestrian functions. Qualitative descriptions of the levels and kinds of graffiti were recorded and inferences were made about their relationship to the surrounding *quartiere*.

## Limitations to Methodology

The two qualitative measures for parking and traffic flow present our only real limitations to documenting street typology. The documentation is limited to certain times of day and, for increased accuracy, would need to be repeated, namely on different days of the week, for a longer period of time.

## Street Typology Visual Legend



### 4-Lane Road

Via Prenestina and Viale della Serenissima are the two major transit passageways. Both streets have public transit, wide sidewalks, tree barriers, and legal side street parking or parking lots.



### 2-lane road

Viale della Venezia Giulia connects central residential development with commercial activity. The road has legal, & diagonal and illegal sidewalk parking as well as narrow sidewalks.

Photo Source (All), Tania Marinos



## Qualitative Analysis





## Street Typology Visual Legend



### 1-Lane road

Within the primary study area roads are all one way traffic lanes with parking lots, legal side street parking, and illegal sidewalk parking. The sidewalks are narrow with light pedestrian usage.



### Unpaved Pedestrian

These paths are located within the center of the park as connectors to different uses within the park such as the two playgrounds and six archaeological ruins.



### Paved Pedestrian

Via Mariano Romiti is a wide major pedestrian pathway that cuts through the Villa Gordiani park. It connects the tram on Via Prenestina to the primary study area on Viale della Venezia Giulia.



### Bike Lane

The bike lane begins in *Parco Dei Gordiani* and then runs alongside Viale della Venezia Giulia. Rarely seen in use.

Photo Source (All), Tania Marinos

## Street Typology Map



Map Source, Bria Francisco

## Analysis

All of the streets within the *quartiere* of Villa Gordiani act as parking and feeder streets into to the major traffic flow of Via Prenestina and Viale delle Serenissima, our most prominent streets. The two major through-ways define the southern and eastern edge of the study area.

Via Mariano Romiti connects citizens from the edge of Villa Gordiani in front of Irpina Tram stop to Viale della Venezia. Half of the path is also a bike path that ends within a park in the northern part of the study area. This park was developed over the Serenissima commuter rail line in cooperation with the rail service and the government. The park remains closed and unfinished due to the discovery of archaeological ruins.



## Qualitative Analysis





# Public Transit Typology

## Introduction

Villa Gordiani's development was originally disconnected from the city center with no public transit options and unpaved roads. Villa Gordiani is now a well-connected *quartiere* due to extensive public transportation improvements and additions. With its location within 30 minutes of Rome's historic center by public transit, Villa Gordiani benefits from exceptional transit accessibility. While Villa Gordiani was at first built beyond public transportation, over time Villa Gordiani has become linked to the a tram and bus several lines, as well as a commuter rail connected to Tiburtina station.



Photo Source, Tania Marinos

## Public Transit Map



Map Source, Bria Francisco

## Analysis

Serenissima Station commuter rail connects to Tiburtina Station. The eastern boundary Viale della Serenissima connects the community to the GRA by bus. The *quartiere* is serviced by a tram on Via Prenestina that ends alongside Termini Station to the west linking Villa Gordiani to both Rome and the rest of Italy.

# Service Analysis

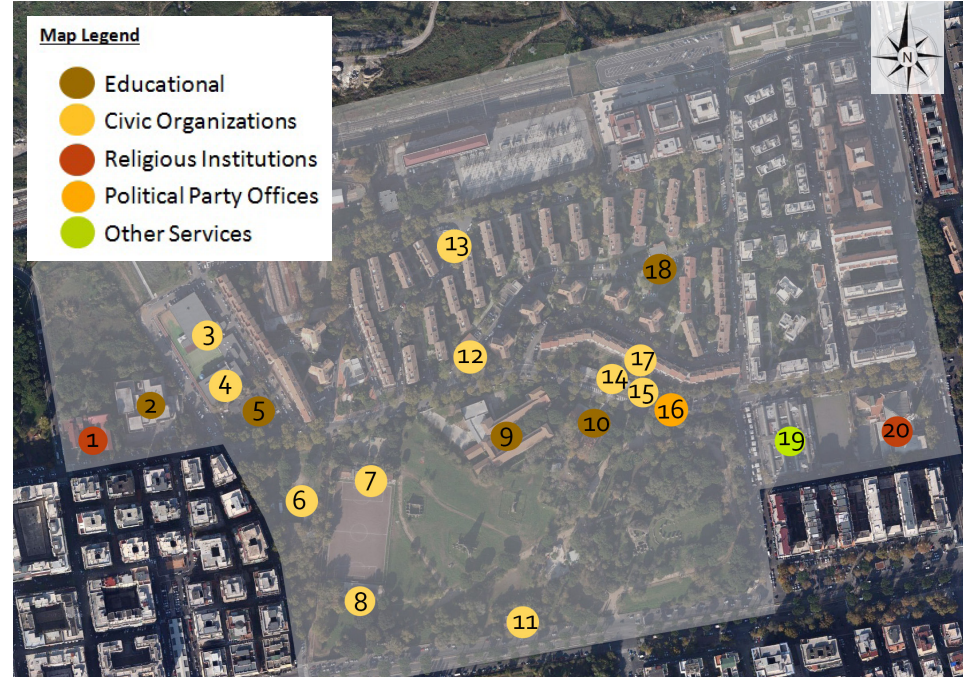
## Introduction

Villa Gordiani can be characterized as a well-served *quartiere*, which provides for all age groups through educational, civic organizations, and religious organizations. Ample services encourage a younger resident population, entertain the elderly and contribute to a better quality of life.

## Methodology

We began the process of locating and recording land use throughout Villa Gordiani, by first walking through the entire *quartiere*. We found abandoned commercial spaces squatted by community groups, making us aware of a need to reevaluate our initial building typologies map. New insight lead us to a catalog several community organizations that occupy commercial buildings found within our primary study area.

## Services Map



Map Source, Bria Francisco

## Services Map Legend

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Parrocchia Santa Agapita Church       | 11. Centro Sociale Anziani Villa Gordiani (2)      |
| 2. B. Pinelli Scuola Media               | 12. Comtato dei Quartiere                          |
| 3. Polisportiva Popolare Rome 6 Gym      | 13. C6—Centro Sociale                              |
| 4. Polisportiva Popolare Rome 6 Pool     | 14. Scuola Popolare di Musica di Villa Gordiani    |
| 5. Infant Daycare                        | 15. Legambiente Circolo Citta Futura               |
| 6. Bocce Recreational Court              | 16. Giovani Democratici, Cicolo MLK                |
| 7. Soccer Field and Facilities           | 17. Associazione Culturale: La Bottega el Gordiani |
| 8. Centro Sociale Anziani Villa Gordiani | 18. Partito Democratico Villa Gordiani             |
| 9. Elementary School                     | 19. Mercato Villa Gordiani                         |
| 10. Toddler Daycare                      | 20. Parrocchia S. Maria Addolorata                 |



## Qualitative Analysis





# Building Typology

## Introduction

Villa Gordiani's public housing complex was conceptualized and designed by architects Mario De Renzi and Saverio Muratori in association with the Ufficio Tecnico Comune di Roma. It was built in phases between the years of 1952-1955, starting with the initial lengthy row house on the westernmost point of the *quartiere*. The housing design is strongly based on a combination of De Renzi and Muratori's 8-story star towers and 4-story staggered row housing. This arrangement is similar to that of public housing in Tuscolano and Valco San Paolo. After the archaeological landmarks which were discovered during the excavation for the housing, the Villa Gordiani houses, the *case popolari*, became the most distinct feature of the *quartiere*. The social housing was built along Viale della Venezia Giulia just beyond via Prenestina and the *parco archeologico*.



Photo Source, Bria Francisco

## Methodology

We located and recorded the building typologies of Villa Gordiani while walking through the *quartiere* on several visits, noting distinctive building types. We began with a general sense of what each of these distinct types of buildings looked like and wrote short descriptions of each, sorting them into six types:

- 1) four story apartment setbacks with stucco
- 2) eight story star tower with exterior stucco
- 3) one –story commercial buildings covered in stucco,
- 4) Industrial buildings
- 5) Institutional buildings covered in stucco, and
- 6) six-to nine-story residential with commercial on the first floor.

Through further research we began to find distinctive differences within the six categories. Building typologies that are similar in design but diverge in typology are classified as the same letters subdivided into numbered categories indicated on the building typology legend.

Armed with limited knowledge of terminology in architecture, the group faced the problem of accurately describing the typology of buildings. We received assistance from course faculty and independent research.

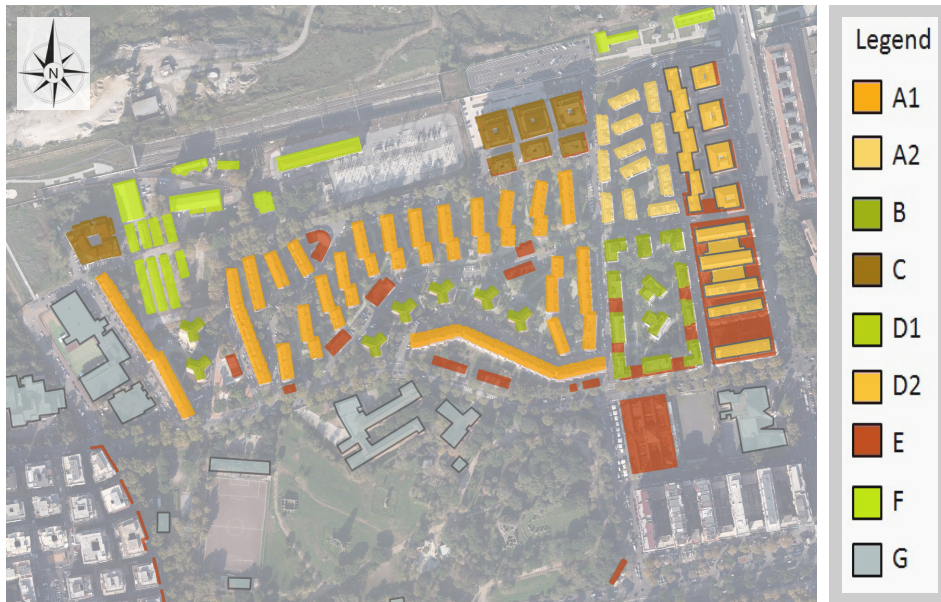


## Qualitative Analysis

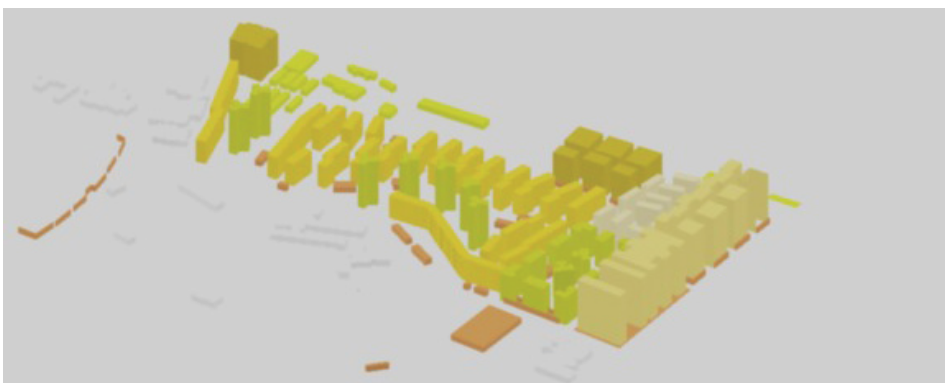




## Building Typology Map



3D Building Typology



Map source (All), Bria Francisco

## Detailed Map Legend

- A1** 4-Story Residential all characterized as having setbacks with a stucco facade. Public housing built in 1952.
- A2** 5-Story Residential public housing similar to A1 yet built in the 1970s.
- B** 8-Story Star Tower Residential with a stucco facade. Public housing built in 1952.
- C** 6-Story private housing with residential and first floor retail designed with a center courtyard and stucco brick facade.
- D1** 5-Story private housing with residential and first floor retail with stucco and brick facade.
- D2** 9-Story Hybrid private housing similar to the Courtyard (C) and Setback Tower Blocks (A1).
- E** Single story commercial with stucco facades and a market with a stone facade.
- F** Industrial one and two-story buildings with stucco and brick facades.
- G** Religious, Educational & Recreational buildings designed for specific usage in contrast to other typologies that have multiple buildings with repetitious design



## Qualitative Analysis



# Interviews

## Introduction and Methodology

To collect citizen interviews our group adopted a semi structured approach. We found it important to speak with the residents of Villa Gordiani in a grounded and respectful manner, and took particular care in disclosing the nature of our investigation to create conditions of informed consent. With the help of our professors as translators (both grammatically and culturally), we asked members of the community what makes Villa Gordiani important. We shaped specific interview questions around the perceived demographic background of our interviewees to inform our study.

To find a balanced representation of Villa Gordiani, we attempted to interview subjects of all demographic types. We asked males and females, young and old, Italians and non-Italians, Villa Gordiani residents and non-residents, and renters and homeowners their opinions of the *quartiere*. To tap into the largest

demographic diversity, we visited Villa Gordiani at different times of the day. By walking around Villa Gordiani after 4pm, we were able to visit many social services that are closed during working hours. While some of our interviews were scheduled beforehand, many of our conversations were impromptu or collected through a convenience sample. We found it easiest to talk to residents enjoying Parco dei Gordiani on a nice day.

*Extended transcripts of each interview can be found the Appendix.*



*Outside the C6 Centro Sociale  
Photo source, Tania Marinos*



## Qualitative Analysis



## Agency

Perhaps a product of Villa Gordiani's initial construction on the outskirts of Rome and past the reaches of public transportation, Villa Gordiani thrives through cohesive community autonomy. Although many of the housing and commercial spaces are publicly owned, the residents of the neighborhood have long expected the government to maintain and run the *quartiere*. Today, residents have assumed the responsibility of operating and using amenities that complement the publicly run services found within the community. In Villa Gordiani we find well-used services such as Santa Maria Addolorata, the Market, C6 Centro Sociale, Neighborhood schools and the *Comitato di Quartiere*.

The relationship between public ownership and tenants of these services is important. Supported exclusively by residents, or in the least, area residents, Villa Gordiani charges the agency of its inhabitants to operate and organize a community resource. In Villa Gordiani, we observe cases of community agency kicking in when the designated public agency fails to deliver needed services. Managers are needed to allow the service to function. Without other residents actively using the service, the amenity would be forced to dismantle due to lack of interest and purpose. In the course of our interviews, we had the opportunity

to speak with leaders of the services and their users, often finding that the two groups can be one in the same. The priest of the church, the manager of the market, the supervisor of the Centro Sociale and the leaders of the Comitato all expressed a passion for supporting Villa Gordiani. These organizers feel pride in facilitating a resource for their community. The common resident who we found basking in the park or walking on the street demonstrated interest and appreciation for these services through lynch maps and spoken word. Active community participation has resulted in a well-served neighborhood despite the failure of the housing authority to provide necessary maintenance.

It is important not to forget the basic community services that the government does provide. These amenities include schools, Parco dei Gordiani, recreation facilities, a daycare facility, and waste management services. However, resident's agency extends beyond these basic needs severed by the government and delves into the real needs of the people, promoting an extended form of public participation. Our interviews demonstrate that, through advocacy and participation, residents of Villa Gordiani contribute to an environment that fosters a true community.



*Interview with the Comitato di Quartiere*

*Photo Source, Ariel Velarde*





*Social housing units have been passed through families for generations*  
Photo Source, Tania Marinos

## Housing Hand-Down

Several of our interviewees spoke of the phenomenon of passing social housing deeds on to succeeding family members. This inheritance has allowed residents of Villa Gordiani to preserve the remarkably inexpensive price of public housing and to maintain a familiar demographic composition in the area.

We learned that this type of inheritance-passing public housing and its rent down generations- is common in Rome's periphery. To explore its social implications in Villa Gordiani, we pried the residents, hoping to clarify their position on the housing hand-down. For the most part, the residents seem content with the process. The Comitato ensured us that the inheritance was legal. Aisling, the supervisor of the Centro Sociale, explained that the system was "wrong", but it "works". While he does not mention housing inheritance, Don Remo described the strong neighborhood ties of Villa Gordiani. Children raised in Villa Gordiani are likely to live in the neighborhood through their adulthood. Despite broad community tolerance of inherited housing, some residents are more critical of the system. Three private renters expressed concern that renting practices in the social housing units are illegal.

As we understand it, this type of hereditary housing may be the best of both worlds for current residents. By passing down housing through the family and within a community, residents preserve a part of the *quartiere's* past. Residents of the public housing units pay little rent for relatively large autonomy, in doing so, they exclude the many people in Rome unsuccessfully applying for public housing. Through this pass-down, residents who may be able to afford market rate housing are unfairly excluding those in greater need of the services.

## Immigration

Interview questions about immigration led to divergent realities. We found that when asking Italians (those native to Italy) in Villa Gordiani about immigrants in the community, they responded positively. We learned of a presence of diversity in Villa Gordiani's middle school after speaking with Professor Cinafarni, the head administrator at B. Pinelli Scuola Media. She described the heterogeneity of her classroom, ensuring that the Italian students and Pinelli's curriculum are welcoming to immigrants. Don Remo explained that the church is popular with immigrants, particularly from India, Romania, Bangladesh and the Philippines. Activities and events held at the church help acclimate newcomers to the area. Also, the market manager found that the vendors who are immigrants are well integrated into market culture and tolerated by the community. It raised a red flag for us when he mentioned only three of the 96 stalls were immigrant-owned, because markets across Rome and Italy have a strong presence of immigrant merchants and employees. Our market survey backs up this information, when only four of the stalls had workers that appeared non-native-Italian to us.

Despite the positive sentiments by native Italians, a Bangladeshi immigrant spoke of a different experience. Our interviewee explained that while he likes the community and its services, he has few Italian friends. After moving to Rome three years ago, he lives "down Prenestina" and chooses to visit Parco dei Gordiani by recommendation of Bangladeshi peers.

From statistical research and our fieldwork, we infer that interactions with immigrants and the concept of immigration is a relatively new occurrence for the residents of Villa Gordiani, especially those who live in the public housing (where apartment leases have been passed through Italian families for generations). Due to this observation, the socio-economic and cultural concerns of immigrants may not be fully realized by the community. In the

interim, however, we hope to understand the present implications of immigration in Villa Gordiani on Rome's peripheral *quartiere*. Perhaps we can look to another interviewee, a pregnant resident of Villa Gordiani, to reconcile this uncertainty. An immigrant herself, our interviewee has lived in Villa Gordiani for eleven years and is married to a man from Tuscany. During our conversation, she commented on the large number of immigrants that use the park. She also explained that in her *palazzini*, she sees many different types of immigrants – notably Chinese – well integrated into life in Villa Gordiani. Her nonchalant description of the other immigrants supports the successful cohabitation of immigrants and Italian natives. When combined with our statistics, the dichotomy regarding immigrant assimilation becomes more apparent.



*Classroom in Santa Maria Addolorata Church*  
Photo Source, Tania Marinos

# Lynch Maps

## Introduction

In his famed report, *The Image of the City*, Kevin Lynch dissects the public image of places by analyzing the overlap of many individual perceptions. He watches residents construct their cities by asking them to draw a map of the place they inhabit. To Lynch, these cognitive maps serve to inspire designers and planners to create more satisfying cities. To us, these maps illuminate the workings of our communities and give our analysis depth.



*Outside Villa Gordiani's Centro Sociale ,a node drawn in Lynch Maps*  
Photo Source, Tania Marinos

## Methodology

Our group worked to gather cognitive maps from community members during our citizen interviews. After speaking with participants for several minutes, we asked our interviewees if they could draw their impression of Villa Gordiani. While many of our interviewees preceded with confused looks, we did our best to clarify our request and best explain the process without influencing their response. Simply stated, we asked subjects to draw a map of their community. With encouragement, many took our offering and drew the maps that follow. Our analysis of their cognitive maps is rooted in a Lynchian discussion of public and private space.



*Villa Gordiani residents creating a Lynch Map*  
Photo Source, Ariel Velarde



## Paths

*"Paths are the channels along which the observer customarily occasionally or potentially moves..." (Lynch, 1960)*

Paths include the streets, walkways, transit lines and alleys in which our residents move through the *quartiere*. In Villa Gordiani, the most prominent paths include Via Prenestina, Viale della Serenissima, and Viale della Venezia Giulia.

In our collection of Lynch maps, paths are the city features that best represent the bearings of a resident to his or her surroundings. Monumental in shaping the boundaries of resident's perception, paths can be found on each of our interviewee's map. The majority of our subjects began their maps by drawing Via Prenestina, one of Rome's consular roads connecting the city center with Villa Gordiani on the eastern periphery.

Via Prenestina is neither a path destination nor an origin point; rather it is a contact between Villa Gordiani and the rest of Rome. Well served by swift moving cars, trams and buses, Via Prenestina provides visitors and residents of Villa Gordiani with a point of access. Forming our study area's southernmost boundary, Via Prenestina marks the distinct entrance to Villa Gordiani. One interviewee, MD Khorshed, described the importance of the tram line in his knowledge of the *quartiere*. A nonresident of Villa Gordiani, Khorshed uses the tram to access the parco archeologico from his home further along Via Prenestina. Although he frequents the park often, he explains that he is largely unfamiliar with Villa Gordiani's residential landscape because he never finds reason to explore past the park's fences. He and his friends exit the tram only to immediately enter the park.



*Via Prenestina, one of Villa Gordiani's most popular paths*

*Photo Source, Tania Marinos*

## Edges

*"Edges are usually, but not quite always, the boundaries between two kinds of areas. They act as lateral references." (Lynch, 1960)*

Edges define boundaries past the residents' interests. They are the borders that have no explicit or immediate use inside the quartiere. Our interviewees rarely drew edges when rendering Villa Gordiani on their Lynch maps.

## Districts

***"Districts are medium-to-large sections of the city, conceived of as having two-dimensional extent, which the observer mentally enters 'inside of', and which are recognizable as having some common, identifying character."***  
*(Lynch, 1960)*

In mapping Villa Gordiani, the most forthright districts are indications of other *quartiere* in the community's surroundings. Only one mapper, Mario, indicated a district separate from Villa Gordiani on his diagram. Mario marked Centocelle, another peripheral *quartiere* approximately four kilometers southeast of Villa Gordiani. In resident interviews, other districts are occasionally mentioned as a point of comparison with Villa Gordiani, especially those along Via Prenestina. Mario linked Villa Gordiani and Centocelle as two popular communities with receding government maintenance.

Villa Gordiani's *parco archeologico* can also be seen as a distinct district within the greater *quartiere*. Roughly half of our participants alluded to the uses of the park inside the boundaries of its fences. Residents most frequently drew the park's soccer field and archaeological ruins, a noted source of aesthetic pleasure and valuable social space within the rendered communities.

Despite some borders of Villa Gordiani and the indication of Centocelle, an overriding lack of district boundaries in many of our subject's maps may point to a uniform perception of neighborhood permeability. Our residents consistently depicted principle roads such as Via Prenestina and Via Serenissima as continuous paths.

Their relative importance, some community members say, relates to the streets' proximity to Villa Gordiani's services and housing. From our interviews,

we note that nonresidents of Villa Gordiani enter the neighborhood freely to use its amenities. Likewise people who live in Villa Gordiani exit the *quartiere* to access Rome's center or to use the services of nearby areas.



***Student-created map of Parco dei Gordiani displayed in Pinelli Scuola Secondario***  
*Photo Source, Ariel Velarde*

## Nodes

**"Nodes are points, the strategic spots in a city into which an observer can enter and which are the intensive foci to and from which he is traveling."  
(Lynch, 1960)**



***Mercato di Villa Gordiani, a node in the quartiere***  
*Photo Source, Tania Marinos*

Undoubtedly, Villa Gordiani's *parco archeologico* is the chief node and most famed feature of the *quartiere*. The *parco archeologico* is a quintessential node: it is a focus for recreational and community activity and serves as a tangible point through which a user can enter. A natural meeting place and ubiquitous point of reference, the park lies at the topographic and social core of the *quartiere*.

The community market is another recurring node in our study area. Nearly every interviewee included the market on his or her map. Permanent and popular, the market serves Villa Gordiani as a supplier of both groceries and social interactions. In our neighborhood interviews, many residents identified themselves as regular clients of the market. Participants cited convenience, low prices and pleasant social run-ins as reasons for why they use the market. Some residents indicated the market's proximity to the major roads of Via Prenestina and Viale della Serenissima on their maps, denoting an area accessible to both automobiles and pedestrians. Just down the street, we noted that the church Santa Maria Adoloratta is the *quartiere's* third most popular node. As a place of religious worship, a venue for community activity, and the provider of numerous child care and supportive services, this church distinguishes itself as a crucial node.

Some nodes are specific to the interviewee. Expectedly, residents marked the nodes most important to them. A pregnant interviewee, indicated nodes where she found services specific to her pregnancy. Her nodes included the Fabia Mater Clinica, a private medical practice specializing in childbirth, and two area pharmacies. The 16-year old residents of Villa Gordiani, on the other hand, are the only ones to map the C6 Centro Sociale and larger area high schools beyond Via Prenestina on their map.



## Landmarks

*"Landmarks are another type of point-reference, but in this case the observer does not enter within them, they are external." (Lynch, 1960)*

Villa Gordiani's landmarks are relatively easy to identify on the Lynch maps we collected. They are the elements "singled out" or selected from hundreds of choices based on some memorable quality that they possess. Landmarks can be the nodes of others- those spaces that individuals know, but do not use. While landmarks seem particular to the individual, several of our maps depict the *quartiere's* public housing projects, the ruins of the *parco archeologico*, and the elementary school as notable buildings in the community. Other examples of landmarks in the neighborhood include the local railroad station, *palazzi*, and churches. Not all of our interviewees illustrated landmarks on their maps.



*Archeological ruins, a landmark in Parco dei Gordiani,  
Photo Source, Tania Marinos*

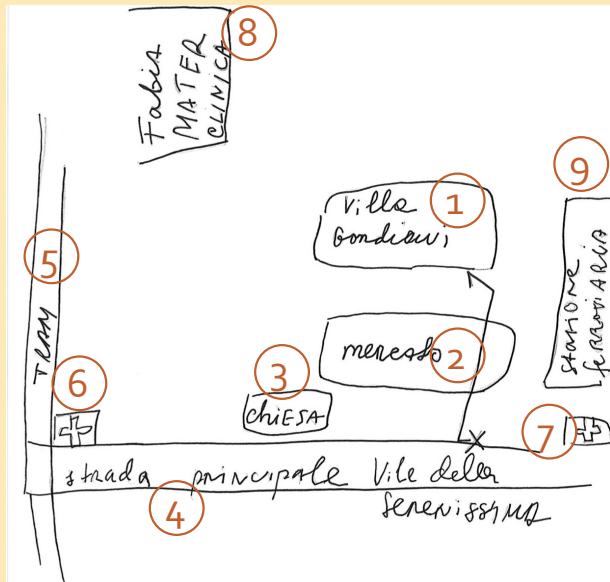


## Qualitative Analysis



# Lynch Maps

\*\*numbers indicate the order participants drew *quartiere* features



Map drawn by a middle aged woman, pregnant with her first child. She is an immigrant married to an Italian man.

## Paths

- Viale della Serenissima

## Edges

- Tram

## Nodes

- Parco dei Gordiani
- Mercato
- Farmacie
- Fabia Mater Clinic

## Landmarks

- Chiesa
- Stazione Ferroviaria



Map drawn by Don Remo, priest of Santa Maria Addolorata.

## Paths

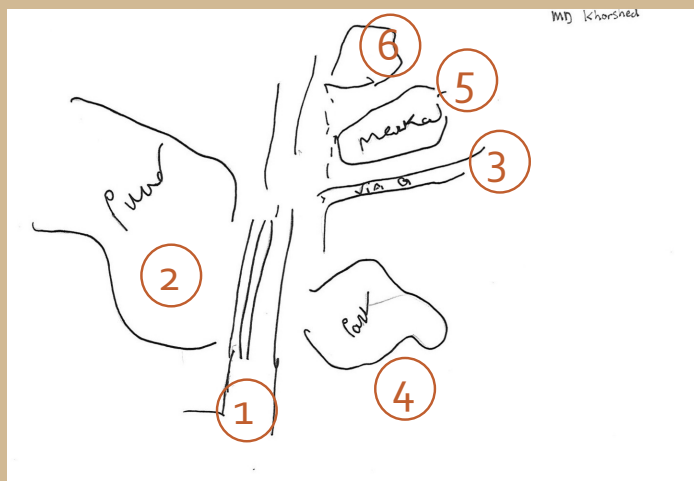
- Via Prenestina
- Viale della Serenissima (Unlabeled)

## Nodes

- Chiesa Santa Maria Addolorata
- Parco dei Gordiani (as indicated by trees and archaeological ruins)

## Landmarks

- Case
- Palazzi



Map by a middle aged Bangladeshi immigrant enjoying Villa Gordiani's park on a sunny day.

Paths

- Via Prenestina, including tram line
- Viale della Venezia Giulia

Nodes

- Parco Gordiani (North of Via Prenestina)
- Parco Gordiani (South of Via Prenestina)
- Mercato
- M.D. Khorshed's home



Map by young residents of Villa Gordiani. These 16 year-olds spend time at the C6 Centro Sociale and can occasionally be found socializing in the public spaces of the quartiere.

Paths

- Via Prenestina
- Viale della Venezia Giulia
- Viale della Serenissima

Districts

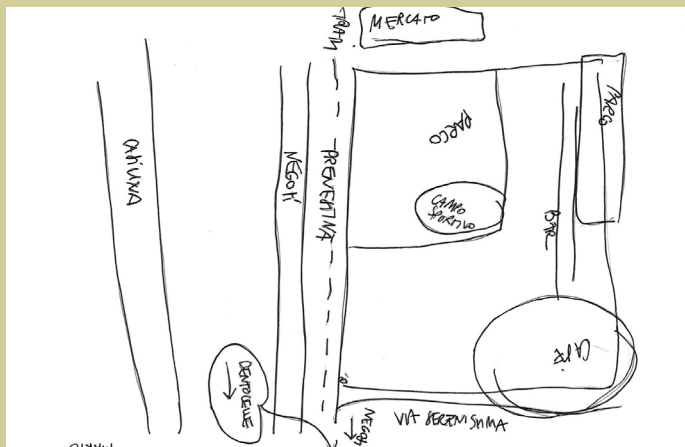
- Parco dei Gordiani

Nodes

- C6 Centro Sociale
- Mercato
- Bar
- Piazza
- Chiesa Parrocchia Sant. Agapito
- Chiesa Santa Maria Addolorata
- Parco dei Gordiani
- Liceo Scuola

# Qualitative Analysis





Map by an elderly man and a member of the Comitato di Quartiere. He has lived in Villa Gordiani most of his life.

Paths

- Via Prenestina
- Tram
- Viale della Serenissima

Districts

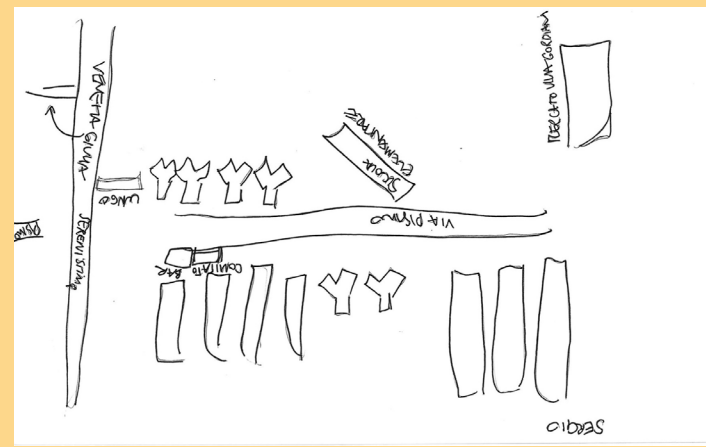
- Unlabeled boundaries of Villa Gordiani
- Centocelle

Edges

- Via Casilina

Nodes

- Parco dei Gordiani
- Campo Sportivo
- Bar
- Café
- Parco (South of Via Serenissima railroad)
- Mercato
- Negozi



Map drawn by a second elderly man. A man in his 70s, he has seen the development of Villa Gordiani since its beginnings. He is a member of the Comitato di Quartiere.

Paths

- Via Pisino
- Viale della Venezia Giulia
- Viale della Serenissima

Nodes

- Comitato
- Bar
- Mercato Villa Gordiani

Landmarks

- Case
  - o Eight (8) Rows of Four Story Housing
  - o Six (6) Tower Buildings
- Scuola Elementare

# Thematic Investigations

## Social Fabric, Housing and Services

A chronological look at Villa Gordiani and the way that it has transformed as a *quartiere* brings to light a tradition of placemaking and turning abandonment into agency. Residents of Borgata Gordiani, the informal housing settlement that gives Villa Gordiani its name, were geographically and socially marginalized. Sent to the southeastern periphery to fend for themselves, they were far from the consciousness of the Roman metropolis and its people. This neglect perseveres into the 1950s when the *case popolare* of Villa Gordiani are established. This community of mostly working-class residents responded to the same geographical and social disregard that crippled Borgata Gordiani by turning inwards. Services became highly localized within the housing and a distinct sense of pride and identity developed as a result. It is at this point in Villa Gordiani's history that we observed the **phenomenon of placemaking**, rooted in the dynamic housing design and a tradition of marginalization. With this shift we see shortcomings within the Villa Gordiani housing community creatively addressed with local solutions. When the government began to



Photo Source, Comitato di Quartiere di Villa Gordiani

disregard the maintenance of green spaces within the housing, residents began to absorb this responsibility as a collective. Insufficient amenities from when the housing was first built were met with a series of renovations until residents were satisfied with their homes. Residents have established an informal system that redistributes vacant housing amongst families who are already rooted in the community. This arrangement emerged in response to a governmental neglect, unable to effectively address the *case popolare*. When Villa Gordiani's aging population began to struggle in the absence of elevators, a group of residents occupied a previously abandoned storefront and formed the Comitato di Quartiere to address its needs. This pattern of turning **abandonment into agency** is one that dominates the early history of the quartiere and contributes to the social fabric of contemporary Villa Gordiani.

Some residents are quick to note that the past 30 years have been characterized by a sense of abandonment. Some of our research tells a different story, one in which the secondary study area experiences years of great growth and development. The addition of essential services and infrastructure during the past 30 years indicates a **disconnect between our primary and secondary** study areas, mainly between the initial case popolare and its surroundings.

Through the use of cognitive mapping, interviews and statistical analysis we confirmed this perceived disconnect. Nonresident Khorshed and Anna, who lives in the private housing, do not include the Villa Gordiani social housing in their Lynch maps. This omission is also evident in the collective Lynch Map of a local group of teenage friends. On the other hand, the Comitato di Quartiere and the priest include the housing and much of the primary study



area as opposed to the secondary study area. Our group interview with the Comitato made little to no mention of the secondary study area. Interviewees who represented services within the secondary study area including the church, market, secondary school, and carnival ride manager knew little of the housing.

This recurring scheme in our field work confirms a disconnect between our primary and secondary study area, prompting an investigation of the objective differences between the two parts of this *quartiere*. Our secondary study area has higher rates of education attainment, has a higher population, and is generally younger than primary area. It also has a more proportionate male to female ratio, has more singles, and houses the clear majority of immigrants. With this, we have hypothesized that the secondary study area presents a trend which may eventually undermine community solidarity in the public housing project.



Photo Source, Tania Marinos

Imperatively, residents of the community rely on the resources managed by their neighbors across both study areas. Through citizen interviews we learned of the convenience of the market, the popularity of the church and the Centro Sociale as a place for teenagers to hang out. By using community services, residents reinforce the demand for these amenities and establish an informal line of communication between the demographically distinct study areas. Their participation asserts the reality that these services are needed in the area, and give purpose to those who organize the amenity. Active community participation has resulted in a well-serviced *quartiere*.

The social fabric which held Villa Gordiani together is now a source of tension. While it once encompassed a relatively homogeneous population of working-class Italians based in the *case popolari*, slow shifts in demographics mirror contemporary Roman trends. This shift is unfamiliar to the residents who fought so hard to empower the *quartiere* in times of severe marginalization. Residents in our primary study area are faced with the challenge of redefining the sense of place which they established so many years ago.

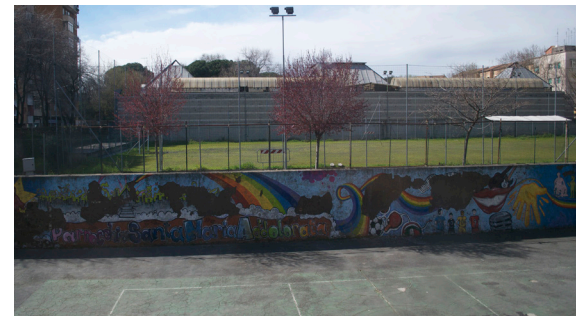


Photo Source, Tania Marinos

## Thematic Investigation





# Conclusion

Studying Villa Gordiani has given us the opportunity to look closely at a peripheral Roman *quartiere*. Its progression from Borgata Gordiani to the Villa Gordiani *case popolare* has laid the foundation for the *quartiere* today, a community conflicted by the challenges of a changing Rome. While older residents of Villa Gordiani maintain that it is still in the periphery of the Roman conscious, younger and more diverse residents consider themselves fortunate to live in such a well-served neighborhood. This reality of the changing periphery is especially prevalent in areas like Villa Gordiani, where residents have worked to organize, manage and use community services. Residents in Villa Gordiani have proven their success in supplementing voids left by the government.

In these two months exploring the streets of Villa Gordiani, we have developed great affection for the parks and the residents, and for the market and the bars. Moreover, the ability to put our urban studies education to use in the field has been an invaluable opportunity.

Through citizen interviews and our time spent investigating the *quartiere*, we have begun to feel like a part of the community is within us. With tools like ISTAT data, land use typologies, interviews and lynch maps we have been able to analyze how people live. We have analyzed how their histories and their stories play out in physical and statistical landscapes.

The themes of social fabric, housing, and services have allowed us to connect our data and have helped us begin to understand the true identity of this neighborhood – an identity shaped by its history, celebrated by its physical landscape, and changed by new generations of residents. The themes have been united by the idea of the residents creating their own rules, filling voids in public services and establishing a close community for themselves. Our group has been inspired by the agency of Villa Gordiani's residents. We are excited to carry the skills we have learned into neighborhoods and communities where we may next be working and living.

Given a longer period of study and a more updated arsenal of statistics, we would have liked to explore trends in demographics and changes over time, particularly in the integration of the primary and secondary areas. We would have liked to do more citizen engagement exercises to determine how residents identify with the *quartiere*. Besides access to services, we believe that the greatest challenges facing Villa Gordiani involve integrating the secondary area with the first; creating a more unified identity for the *quartiere*, with less division and more inclusion for all residents.

We are grateful for what Villa Gordiani has given to us. Hopefully this analysis can be given back to them in the spirit of strengthening the identity all residents of the *quartiere*. Although the *quartiere* faces several challenges, tools such as a rich history and ample community amenities promise a strong future for Villa Gordiani.



Photo Source, Tania Marinos



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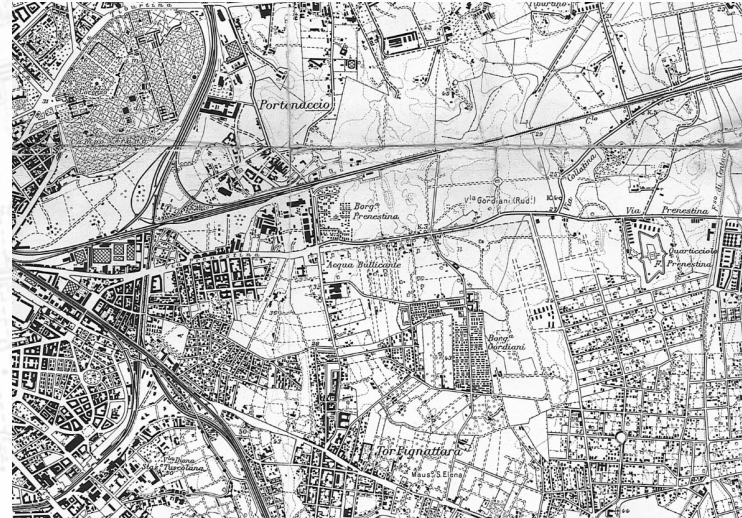
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# Appendix





# Appendix: Extended Interviews

## Interview with Professor Cinafarani Pinelli Scuola Secondaria

Carlotta Fioretti  
March 7, 2013

To address the lack of younger residents visible in Villa Gordiani, we spoke with Professor Cinafarani, the administrator of B. Pinelli Scuola Secondaria. The public middle school, known for its extensive art program, lies tucked away in a decrepit palazzo and often looks vacant. Despite its apparent state of disrepair, the school is highly functional and continues to serve as hub of education, extracurricular activities, and creativity for the citizens of Villa Gordiani.

Our conversation began with a recollection of Pinelli's beginnings. It was opened in 1982-1983 to accommodate the first children of the baby boom generation, the school has been in continuous operation since it first opened. Today, nearly one third of the classrooms remain vacant due to a general decline in area population. Professor Cinafarani described the resulting loss of attention and funding from the governing state. These days, little public money is allotted to building maintenance and trivial items such as toilet paper and school supplies often go overlooked.

In addition to its reputation as a center for artistic creativity, Professor Cinafarani describes her school as heterogeneous. Nine to eleven percent of Pinelli's

student population are children of immigrant, or immigrant themselves. As Professor Cinafarani ensures, the Italian students and curriculum are welcoming to immigrants. Among efforts to help the students integrate, Pinelli teaches Italian language to non-native students. Two to three days a week, the school organizes afterschool activities open to all students. Children spend the afternoons not serviced by school programs socializing in the park.

Finally, we spoke to Professor Cinafarani about an observation that recently caught our attention: the high drop out rate in Italian schools. She explained that under Italian law, children could stop their education following their competition middle school. A number of children in Villa Gordiani continue to leave school at this age, making their years at Pinelli the last of their formal education. While these kids may later choose to attend vocational schools, these children would undoubtedly continue to live at home until at least age 18. Regardless of a complete secondary education, Italian children are likely to rely on the family as a primary economic source well past graduation.



## Carnival Ride Operator

Viviana Andriola  
March 14, 2013

Villa Gordiani features a large playground and carnival rides for small children in the center of the park. We spoke with grounds keeper for the rides, a man in his late 20s who has been living in Villa Gordiani for the past 2 years. Standoffish, the man explains that he finds living in Villa Gordiani very boring. With nothing here for young people, he has to leave the neighborhood for entertainment and social opportunities. The man confirmed that Villa Gordiani is open at night. Most often, grandparents bring their small grandchildren to the carnival rides. While the space is public, the ride operation pays 400 euros for 3 months to rent the space. A small fee is charged to children who wish to use the service.

## Bangladeshi Immigrant

Viviana Andriola  
March 14, 2013

We went to speak to some of the visitors simply enjoying the park on this sunny day. Our first audience, two Bangladeshi immigrants who appeared to be in their mid 30s. We had a conversation with the more talkative of the two. Our interviewee came to Italy three years ago, leaving his family behind in Bangladesh. He works cleaning offices, houses and other private spaces around Rome. He does not live in Villa Gordiani, rather, he explains that he lives down Via Prenestina. He chooses to live near Villa Gordiani by recommendation of Bangladeshi friends also living nearby (likely in Torpignata, Centocelle, and Tiburtina *quartieri*). The man does not have many Italian friends nor does he find Italians to be friendly. Finally, he tells us that he likes the park because he can see it immediately after exiting the tram.





## Parents of Small Children

Viviana Andriola

March 14, 2013

We walked into the park's playground that is being used by several small children and their accompanying supervision and continued to strike conversation with a man in his 40s. He is presumably a father of one of the children. Although he does not live within the technical boundaries of Villa Gordiani, he says that he and many other people nearby use the park a lot. He describes a nice neighborhood and explains that the park is better maintained than it had been in the past. Teams from AMA can be seen cutting grass, disposing litter and otherwise maintaining the park. The man emphasizes the convenience of the neighborhood, explaining that the area satisfies shopping and educational needs. The man says that all local students attend the Villa Gordiani public schools. Villa Gordiani's market is inexpensive and frequented by many people.

To help us understand Villa Gordiani's connection with Rome's historical and business center, we asked the man about the local transportation options. He explained that the tram is most widely used due to its cost and convenience. The heavy rail train station at Via Serenissima is rarely used. The man sees the station as empty space with few trains ever stopping at the station. If people in the area want to use the train to leave Rome, they likely go to the Tiburtina Station where headways are more frequent. While the man describes the small park along the Serenissima station as a dangerous place, he says that he finds the rest of the neighborhood very safe.

## Pregnant Women

Viviana Andriola

March 14, 2013

We found a pregnant resident cooling off from light exercise in the park on one of the benches north of the playground. An immigrant, (likely from Eastern Europe- although never explicitly discussed), she has lived in Villa Gordiani for 11 years. She is now pregnant with her first child and she and her Tuscan husband are ready to start a family in the area. They are looking to move out of their current private housing into another apartment, but wish to remain in Villa Gordiani's boundaries. The woman commented on the large number of old people and immigrants in the park. She explained that in her *palazzini*, she sees many different types of immigrants – notably Chinese – well integrated into life in Villa Gordiani. She mentions that she likes Villa Gordiani because of its convenience and accessibility. She can walk everywhere within in the community, which is important to her because her pregnancy forbids her to drive. Fabbia Mater, a private medical clinic that specializes in childbirth, is also nearby. Our interviewee finds Villa Gordiani a modest, safe, and quiet place to live and raise children. At times, she explains that street cleanliness can be a problem, especially in areas south of Via Prenestina. She spoke positively about public services in the neighborhood (especially for children) and uses the market everyday.





## Pastor Don Remo

Viviana Andriola

March 14, 2013

We arranged to have a meeting with Priest Don Remo of Santa Maria Addolorata, a church located on the Eastern end of Villa Gordiani. A lively man in his 60s, Don Remo offered to show us around the massive church and explained its history. Weaving through its dozens of rooms, our group quickly realized that Santa Maria's space provides a needed node for social activity and participation in Villa Gordiani.

Santa Maria Addolorata works to fill the void left by the periphery's infamously lacking social services. In addition to religious services, the church offers afterschool and summer programs to children in the *municipio*. During the school year, the church provides homework clubs, tutoring, and early childhood education free of charge. The church is known for its film screenings (Santa Maria Addolorata occupies a converted cinema after all), theater productions, and soccer and basketball recreational facilities. In the summer, Santa Maria Addolorata organizes a four-week summer camp in part with ACR, an Italian catholic action group for young people. For a small fee, parents bring their children to spend the morning and/or afternoon to participate in both religious and non-religious activities. Children also have the option to participate in a week-long holiday to the Italian countryside. Neighborhood volunteers run all activities provided by the church. Funds and labor from the church and its volunteer's help to feed over 70 hungry families in the community. Don Remo explained that residents of Villa Gordiani are very proud and willing to help neighbors in need.

The church also offers community activities to families, single people and the elderly. Don Remo explained that the church is popular with immigrants, particularly from India, Romania, Bangladesh and the Philippines. He said that when people first move to Villa Gordiani they often feel as they don't belong. Overtime, newcomers acclimate to community services including activities at

Santa Maria Addolorata. Indicative of strong neighborhood ties, children raised in Villa Gordiani are known to marry, move away, and return to Villa Gordiani. Families that move to a neighboring *quartiere* regularly visit Villa Gordiani to use its services.



## Market Manager

Viviana Andriola

March 7, 2013

With great timing, we sought out the manager of Villa Gordiani's market to ask questions about the market's business and its clientele. We found him in his office closing the books for that day and without hesitation he was ready to field our questions. We first spoke about the financial relation between the market and its vendors. He informed us that the market space is publicly owned, but managed by the cohort of vendors. Each vendor pays a small rental fee to occupy a stand. Once collected, that money is used to pay the bills of the operation including electricity, insurance, etc. Today, each vendor has their own shop to sell their products, but in the future, the market hopes to form a cooperative to sell its products collectively. The manager explains that a collective supply of produce could yield larger profits for vendors without raising the selling price of their goods. He describes the market as a public good, offering a wide range of goods at a very low cost. In fact, the manager claims that prices have not been raised in the market since the year 2000!

The manger has owned a stall in the market for 30 years. He, like many other vendors, lives about 7-10 kilometers away, and commutes to the market daily. He explains that vendors who grow the produce that they sell live further away to maintain a farm. Despite the distance, they still sell every day. Immigrants run three of the market stands. Although they hold a minority of the stands, the market manger describes these stands as well integrated and tolerated by the community. The market has existed institutionally since the 1950s, but has moved to its current location since the indoor market structure was built in 1995. While the market began as they shopping hot spot for young women of the area, an aging population has resulted in a demographic shift. Today, everyone who lives in the community, particularly the elderly people of Villa Gordiani, frequent the market. Older people like the market for its convenience (they can reach it without using a car), fresh products, and the relationships they have formed with the vendors. Like the vendors, customers also travel

from 7-10 kilometers to shop at the market because of its good reputation. An ATAC bus route formerly served the market from other communities, but with an uncertain smirk the manger said that the line has since been terminated.

The market maintains a good relationship with Villa Gordiani's elderly center, providing food for the community based soup kitchen. The market has previously been involved with the local schools, but today remains more removed due to bureaucratic authorization.





## Comitato di Quartiere

Claudia Meschiari

March 26, 2013

It was 1957 and the peripheral plot that lies between *Borgata* Gordiani and *Borgata* Prenestina had been chosen as the site of the city's newest social housing development. Like much of Rome's eastern periphery, public housing in Villa Gordinai was built to satisfy the demand for housing after the destruction of Second World War. The men chuckled as they described the land before the development — one kitchen-less *osteria* (you bring the food, they'll supply the wine), sheep, and nothing else! A wealthy family, the Lancilotti's, owned much of the land and gave it to the Roman government to be developed under the Marshall Plan.

We were told that Villa Gordiani started far on the "outs" of Rome. The 2,200 unit development was built past the last stop of public transit and isolated from the center of Rome. During the 1950s and 60s residents of the *quartiere* suffered from lack of employment and resulting starvation. While neighborhood amenities existed within the publically owned commercial spaces, there were few options. In the first decade following development Villa Gordiani contained a *fornaio*, a bar, two *tabbachi* and a convent. For the most part, the men joked, early Villa Gordiani was quiet enough to here the start of any car in the area.

In the 1970s developers built private housing in Villa Gordiani. Social problem of drug use and distribution swept Rome's periphery, especially areas with large migrant communities. As Villa Gordiani grew, its population and its problems matured. In the 1970s and early 80s the government briefly intervened to provide renovations to the social housing projects. Public efforts retrofitted elevators into the eight story tower buildings and built fences around apartments and the Villa Gordiani Park. The men explained that the government's involvement ignited a debate about local municipalities' role in maintaining public housing buildings. While residents feel that infrastructural improvements to the neighborhood should be done with public money, a lack of municipal funding and political

complications has left the problems of upkeep at the feet of the residents. The government has undertaken few development projects since the 1980s.

Although the Comitato did not formally unite until 2008, the group has been inspired by problems that originated nearly 30 years ago. We took this opportunity to ask the men of the Comitato to elaborate on their modern history and its connection with the past. They happily obliged. The men explained that the Comitato was a formation of their friends, all who had grown up in Villa Gordiani since its beginnings, and all now retired with some free time. They thought that the *quartiere* needed an entity to advocate for its resident's best interests. The group occupied a small commercial space on Via Pisino and organized themselves into coalition of public participants.

The men are specifically driven by the issue of a lack of elevators in the Four Story Residential Building in the community. As the general population of Villa Gordiani has aged, increasing numbers of elderly people find their flats inaccessible. The men described not having buildings equipped with elevators "like being jailed inside of your own home". Since it's founding, the Comitato works to address more issues and to broadly support Villa Gordiani's elderly, free of charge. The men are motivated by the government's lack of attention to their social housing projects, dating the negligence back to the creation of *municipi* in 1979. Charged by their abandonment, the Comitato fights to bring maintenance and other public services back to the *quartiere*. Despite their full efforts, the men say that it is frustratingly slow to change causes of which they have little control over. In the occasion that the Comitato can help directly, the men take action. The Comitato helps provide Internet access to allow elderly people to connection to their pension funds (as the men described, the Internet is the only way to receive retirement payments). Donations fund the work of the Comitato.





## C6 Centro Sociale

March 5, 2013

Today, about 5,000 residents live in Villa Gordiani's public housing development and 20,000 live within *quartiere* as a whole. The neighborhood is defined by its working class tradition and a housing hereditary mechanism allows fathers to pass down public housing deeds and rent control to their sons. When we asked the Comitato the legitimacy of these inheritances, they responded with a reassurance that they were legal. While Villa Gordiani was once considered in the boondocks of Rome, today the village is very much in the city proper. Despite an easy 20-minute tram ride into Termini Station (ATAC did eventually expand the tram line further east on Via Prenestina), Villa Gordiani's spacious park and quiet streets make the *quartiere* seem far removed from Italy's biggest city. The men of the Comitato explained that a concentration of nightlife is missing from the neighborhood. Commercial businesses in Villa Gordiani tend to survive only on Via Prenestina, one of Rome's busiest thoroughfares. The vast use of the local markets, the growth of shopping area around Via Prenestina, and the establishment of supermarkets such as Auchan fill the commercial niche of the neighborhood. Value from the archaeological sites (and the strong potential to encounter more ruins) has prevented the construction of private buildings and preserved Villa Gordiani from over-development.

Villa Gordiani, the men ensure us, is a great place to live. After all, they have been here their whole lives! As public finances fall deeper into deficit, the government has tried to sell its public housing to individuals or private corporations to make money. This is a phenomenon occurring throughout Rome's periphery, but has had little success in Villa Gordiani. Three years ago, the government tried to sell its social housing units to its residents. Only a small number of people have bought. As the men explain, the residents of Villa Gordiani understand that the homes may be inexpensive to buy, but are extraordinarily pricey to maintain. The Comitato expresses the urgency in which the government should pay for maintenance costs, especially in the dilapidated state of the homes. This attempt to sell Villa Gordiani's public housing marks the third time in 20 years that the government had tried to unload its property.

Upon visiting the neighborhood one evening, we went to Villa Gordiani's Centro Sociale a service that we had heard about, but was always closed in the day. The youth center was open and we spoke with a group of teenagers and Aisling. We learned that the youth center, C6 Centro Sociale, functioned as a place for teenagers to go, just to hang out. Open evenings from 4pm to 8pm, C6 provided the kids with a safe place to relax and to be with friends after school.

Aisling also informed us of some of the *quartiere's* issues, including large drop out rates and public housing inheritances. Despite a sometimes-gloomy reality, Aisling explained that Villa Gordiani is a tightly knit community.



**Francesca Ferlicca and William Goldsmith conducted the following interviews:**

**Elderly Couple and the History of the Borgata**

Francesca Ferlicca & William Goldsmith  
February 14, 2013

While discussing the history of Borgata Prenestina, Francesca and Bill encountered an elderly couple ready to heed their questions. The couple told us that they had lived in Villa Gordiani since the 1950s, when the social housing was first built. They explained that the original Borgata Gordiani, was built on the other side of Via Dignano d' Istria during the Fascist era. Only fields occupied the area that is now Villa Gordiani. The woman told us that she had to attend school in Trastevere, because in its earliest days Villa Gordiani was void of social and cultural facilities. The building that currently houses the elementary school on Viale Venezia Giulia, used to serve for Sunday communion.

The couple also mentioned that the social housing buildings were repaired sometime in the 1970s. Elevators were added in recent years.

**Three Men, Social vs. Public Housing**

Francesca Ferlicca & William Goldsmith  
February 14, 2013

Bill and Francesca learned of the rift between social and private housing owners through an interview with three men on Largo delle Terme Gordiane. The men, one elderly, one middle aged, and one younger journalist, were critical of social housing rent not being correctly or legally controlled. They explained that despite the area's poor population, Villa Gordiani families pass inexpensive social housing through generations as a kind of inheritance. The young man also scorned the *Sovrintendeza's* for their indifference to the adding the archaeological area of the park to local street signage.

**Private Housing**

Francesca Ferlicca & William Goldsmith  
February 14, 2013

An old woman in the neighborhood explained that she has lived in the community's private housing for 50 years. She describes her house as bigger and better in comparison with the public housing.





## Shopping

Francesca Ferlicca & William Goldsmith  
February 14, 2013

Another women in the community explained her shopping habits. The women said that she shops at both the market along Viale Venezia Giulia and frequents the businesses along Via Albona.

## Perceived Danger in Villa Gordiani

Francesca Ferlicca & William Goldsmith  
February 14, 2013

Two policemen in the *quartiere* explained that the walled industrial site is a generating station that provides electrical energy to the residential developments. AMA uses the space across the street- the small and circular building at the corner between Via Albona and Via Buie d'Istria. Finally when asked if the community was safe, the policemen said that Villa Gordiani is dangerous because of the social composition of the inhabitants and abundance of immigrants.

## Serenissima Station

Francesca Ferlicca & William Goldsmith  
February 14, 2013

Francesca and Bill spoke to an elderly father and his adult son walking their dog in the park near Sereneissima Station. They told us that their family lives in one of the social housing buildings built in the 1950s. Their apartment is 80 cubic meters and they pay 110 euros per month's rent. 80 euros is allocated exclusively to rent, while the rest is for maintenance. The men tell us that while the *Comune* is supposed to resolve electrical problems, water damages, and other household issues, the government rarely reacts in time. Residents of the social housing have grown accustomed to fixing these problems themselves.

The men also explained the recent development of the Serenissima railroad station. The station was designed with buried tracks to allow the construction of a park above the rail line. Construction has stopped and the park remains incomplete. The men are happy with the new parking that has accompanied the station.





# Thematic Investigations Organization Charts

## Theme: Social Fabric

Historically, residents of Borgata Gordiani are forced to the periphery and marginalized. They live in poverty and are isolated from the rest of Rome. They start with nothing.

With the establishment of the Villa Gordiani *case popolare*, residents are given something of their own. Although they are still peripheral and isolated, there is a sense of permanence within the housing project.

A sense of identity and pride develop around the housing, much of which is evident today.

With this shift we see that shortcomings within the Villa Gordiani housing community are addressed with local solutions.

Does the physical design of the housing contribute to this?

Was this the response to historical marginalization?

Disregard the maintenance of green spaces.

Residents collectively maintain green spaces.

4-story houses are difficult to access for Villa Gordiani's growing elderly population.

A group of residents occupy a historical abandoned storefront and form Villa Gordiani's Comitato di Quartiere.

Initial housing is lacking in adequate amenities as the result of minimal funding.

Residents slowly renovate their homes until they adequately serve their needs.

The community is located 6 km from the center of Rome and is difficult to access.

Villa Gordiani develops into hyper localized community, relatively self sufficient within the housing complex.

## Placemaking

Residents consider the past 30 years to be a period of unwarranted abandonment.

This conflicts with the vibrant and well serviced quartiere with a changing demographic that we observed in our field work.

Is this sentiment of abandonment the result of a changing quartiere? One which is made up of our residential primary study area AND our newer mixed-use secondary study area?

This begs the question, what is the relationship between our primary and secondary study areas?

There is a perceived disconnect between the primary and secondary study area:

**Interviews of note:**  
Our group interview with the Comitato informed much of our local history but made little to no mention of the secondary study area. Interviews with the church, market, secondary school, carnival ride manager knew little of the housing.

**Lynch maps of note:**  
Nonresidents Khorshed, Anna, and the youth group does not include the Villa Gordiani housing in their cognitive mapping. The Comitato di Quartiere and the priest include the housing and much of the primary study area as opposed to the secondary study area.

Is there an objective difference between the primary and secondary study area?

**Statistical patterns of note:**  
Our secondary study area has higher rates of education attainment, has a higher population, and is generally younger. The secondary study area has a more proportionate male to female ratio, has more singles, and houses the clear majority of immigrants.

## Abandonment to Agency

**Villa Gordiani's social fabric is the lens through which larger narratives take form. Historical placemaking and patterns of turning abandonment to agency distinguish this quartiere. Moreover, Villa Gordiani's changing social fabric highlights a disconnect between our primary and secondary study areas: between the old and new, familiar and unfamiliar.**

## Primary versus Secondary Study Areas



Community Expectation of Government Accountability

Villa Gordiani begins due to government intervention. Where residents are forced to move out of the center of Rome and must create Borgata.

In 1952, formal housing is created and Villa Gordiani is formed. The creation of housing is a top down approach, although the housing does remain an example of public housing excellence.

Tram line built to housing development.

In the 1970s and early 80s the government briefly intervened to provide renovations to the social housing projects.

Retrofitted elevators into the Six Story Tower buildings and built fences around apartments and the Vila Gordiani Park.

Government Intervention

The 2,200 unit development was built past the last tram stop of public transit and isolated from the center of Rome. During the 1950s and 60s residents of the quartiere suffered from the lack of employment and resulting starvation.

Villa Gordiani was void of social and cultural facilities

Comune is supposed to resolve electrical problems, water damages, and other households issues, the government rarely reacts in time.

Indifferent to maintaining and adding the archaeological of the park to local street signage.

Resulting loss of attention and funding from the governing state. Little public money is allotted to building maintenance and trivial items such as toilet paper and school supplies often go overlooked

Government Disregard

While residents feel that infrastructure improvements to the neighborhood should be done with public money, a lack of municipal funding and political complications has left the problems of upkeep at the feet of the residents.

Comitato forms to fill the need for an entity to advocate for its residents best interests.

Fought to keep housing public. In the past 20 years 3 attempts have been made by the government to privatize the housing, an attempt to free themselves of accountability.

The process of passing down social housing deeds within the Villa Gordiani resident pool allows for residents to self-correct against lapse regulation on behalf of the housing authority.

**Villa Gordiani's housing issues can be defined by the cyclical interest of the government in the affairs and well being of the neighborhood. This sporadic involvement and structural intervention in the neighborhood contrasts sharply with the communities continuous expectations from the government to maintain the community.**

Does this structural government intervention and abandonment lead to agency?

The problem of poor maintenance does not reduce community expectations in government accountability.

Lack of government's involvement ignited a debate about local municipalities' role in maintaining public housing buildings.





# Theme: Services

Historically, residents of Borgata Gordiani are forced to the periphery and marginalized. They live in poverty and are isolated from the rest of Rome. They start with nothing.

With the establishment of the Villa Gordiani *case popolare*, residents are given something of their own. Although they are still peripheral and isolated, there is a sense of permanence within the housing project.

A sense of identity and pride develop around the housing inspiring residents to unite around *their* community.

Can community unity perpetuate itself?

Lack of government attention further isolates the residents, but gives them autonomy and freedom from bureaucracy.

Was this the response to historical marginalization?

Villa Gordiani's residents take initiative to operate and organize community resources

Without residents using the service, amenities risk shutting down because of lack of purpose

If the government attends to the *quartiere*, will citizens still form a cohesive community?

Services established from resident agency

Villa Gordiani's services are the products of resident agency. Fueled by the government's abandonment of the quartiere, residents are driven to organize and manage community services. Other citizens use these resources, giving purpose to each amenity and allowing them to stay in service.

## Primarily Citizen Operated

### Mercato Villa Gordiani

Organizers: Market Manager and vendors

Users: residents of the quartiere and surrounding neighborhoods

### Santa Maria Addolorata

Organizers: Pastor Don Remo

Users: residents of the quartiere and surrounding neighborhoods

### C6 Centro Sociale

Organizers: Unknown

Users: Villa Gordiani's teenagers

### Comitato di Quartiere

Organizers: Retired men of the quartiere

Users: Elderly

## Primarily Government Run

### Parco dei Gordiani

Schools, including Pinelli Scuola Secondaria

Active community participation has resulted in a well serviced quartiere

Historical Context of Abandonment

Products of Resident Agency

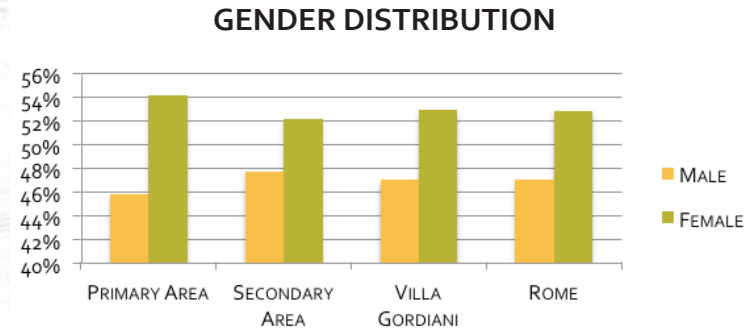




# Supplemental Quantitative Analysis

Population	
Primary Area	1,943
Secondary Area	3,385
Villa Gordiani	5,328

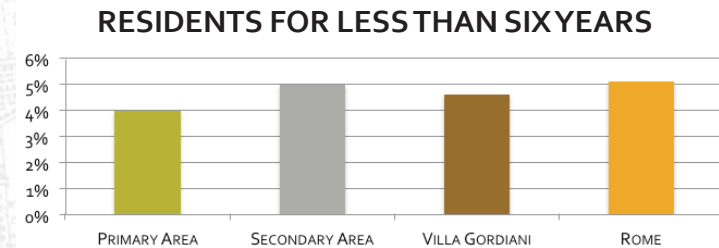
Table 1.1 – Population expressed numerically by study area and total for the *quartiere*



Graph 1.1 – Visual representation of gender distribution gaps, by area

Resident Turnover	
Residents for Less than Six Years	
Primary Area	4.0%
Secondary Area	5.0%
Villa Gordiani	4.6%
Rome	5.1%

Table 1.3 – Percentage of residents in an area with residency of less than six years



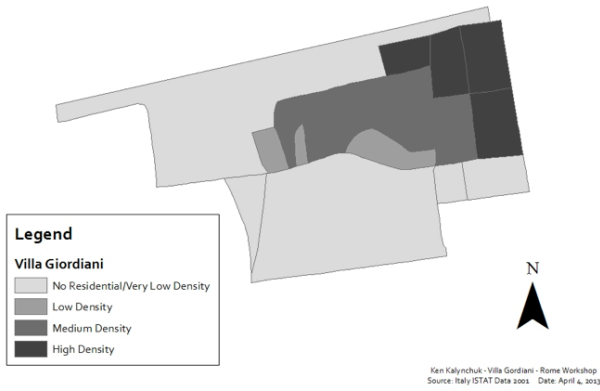
Graph 1.2 – Visual representation for residency of less than six years, by percentage of tract population, by area

Age Distribution				
	Youth (0-14)	Young Adult (15-34)	Middle Age (35-64)	Senior Residents (65+)
Primary Area	9.6%	23.9%	38.7%	27.8%
Secondary Area	12.1%	25.7%	38.3%	24.0%
Villa Gordiani	11.2%	25.1%	38.4%	25.4%
Rome	12.8%	25.5%	42.6%	19.0%

Table 1.4 – Percentage of each age grouping, by area



### VILLA GORDIANI DENSITY

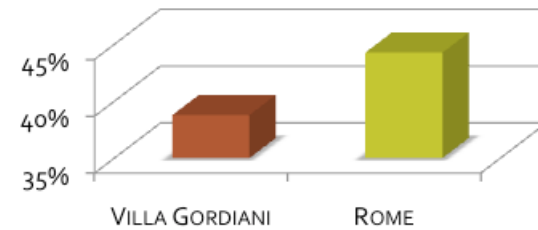


GIS Map 1.1 – Physical representation of density, calculated by tract population over tract area

	Relationship Status				
	Single/Unmarried	Married	Separate	Widowed	Divorced
Primary Area	36.7%	46.9%	2.5%	12.3%	1.7%
Secondary Area	37.0%	50.9%	2.1%	8.7%	1.3%
Villa Gordiani	36.9%	49.4%	2.2%	10.0%	1.5%
Rome	40.7%	47.0%	2.5%	7.7%	2.1%

Table 2.2 – Population’s relationship status, compared proportionally by area

### PERCENT OF RESIDENTS IN THE WORKFORCE



Graph 3.2 – Visual representation of percentage of residents in workforce, by area

	Average Family Size						
	1 Person	2 People	3 People	4 People	5 People	6 People	>6 People
Primary Area	23.15%	37.19%	21.92%	13.30%	3.82%	0.62%	3.69%
Secondary Area	25.92%	33.03%	21.31%	15.63%	3.05%	1.07%	6.75%
Villa Gordiani	23.58%	32.71%	20.38%	13.99%	3.16%	0.85%	5.33%
Rome	28.16%	28.98%	21.00%	17.25%	3.85%	0.76%	4.84%

Table 2.1 – Percentage of population by family size, by area



Education Attainment						
	University Degree or Diploma	Secondary School	Middle School	Primary School	Preschool	Less/Other
Primary Area	3.4%	18.9%	33.7%	31.4%	7.7%	1.0%
Secondary Area	5.9%	24.8%	29.2%	26.8%	7.7%	0.7%
Villa Gordiani	5.0%	22.6%	30.8%	28.5%	7.7%	0.8%
Rome	14.1%	32.3%	24.7%	16.8%	6.5%	0.5%

Table 4.1 – Populations of areas sorted by education attainment level (levels completed, not enrolled in)

Female Education Attainment						
	University Degree or Diploma	Secondary School	Middle School	Primary School	Preschool	Less/Other
Villa Gordiani	5.10%	21.66%	26.05%	32.68%	8.90%	1.06%
Rome	13.34%	32.15%	23.11%	18.92%	7.13%	0.67%

Table 4.3 – Female education attainment level as percentage of female population, by area

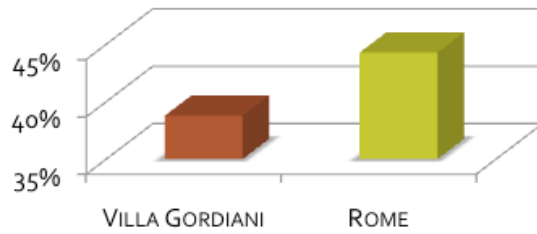
Male Education Attainment						
	University Degree or Diploma	Secondary School	Middle School	Primary School	Preschool	Less/Other
Villa Gordiani	4.8%	23.7%	36.2%	23.7%	6.3%	0.5%
Rome	15.0%	32.6%	26.4%	14.4%	5.7%	0.3%

Table 4.5 - Male education attainment level as percentage of female population, by area

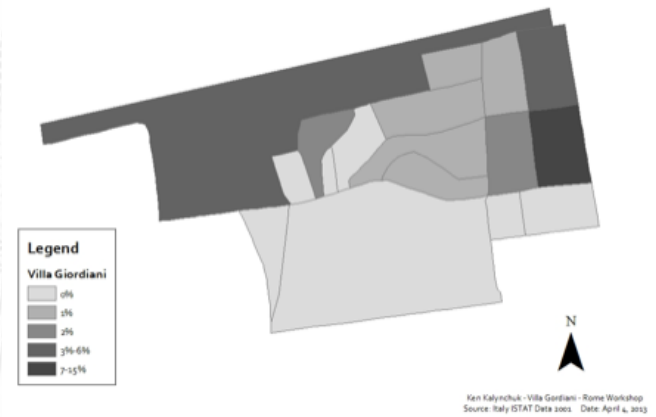




**PERCENT OF RESIDENTS IN WORKFORCE**



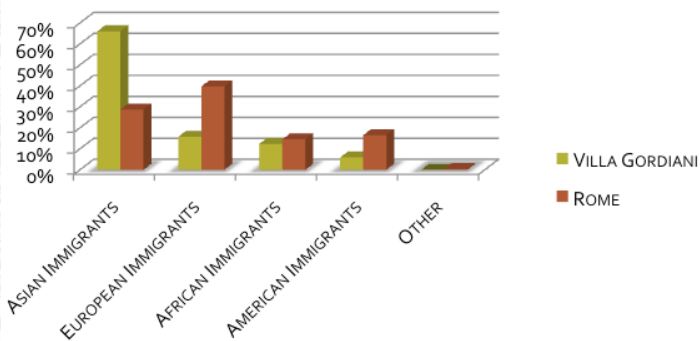
**IMMIGRANTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TRACT**



Graph 4.1 – Visual representation of education attainment, by area

GIS Map 5.2 – Physical representation of the percentage of Villa Gordiani’s immigrant population, by tract

**IMMIGRATION BY ORIGIN**



Graph 5.1 – Visual representation of immigrants comparatively as percentage of groups, by area



# Street Survey

A quantitative survey recording street features, traffic structure and public transportation options found in Villa Gordiani.

Street Name	Type/Size	Traffic	Traffic Type	Sidewalk (ppl)	Parking	Green	Public Trans.	Major Int.	Building Info.
Via Prenestina	4 lane	5	car/bus/tram	4	legal streetside bothsides	street tree barrier	Tram (# 5, 14, 19) Bus (#112, 113, 150, 213, 312, 314, 501, 541)	w/ Viale della Serenissima	
Via Dignano D'Istria	1 lane	2	car	2	legal diag./legal streetside	n/a	Bus (#541)	w/ Via Prenestina	major retail road
Via della Venezia Giulia	2 lane	3	car/bus/bike	4 (bikelane)	legal streetside bothsides	tree barrier	Bus (#541)	w/ Viale della Serenissima	
Via Mariano Romiti	2 lane	3	pedestrian	3	n/a	park	n/a	w/ Via Prenestina	
Via Montona	1 lane	1	car	1	legal streetside bothsides	n/a	n/a		
Via Tolmezzo	1 lane (dead-end)	1	car	1	legal streetside bothsides	n/a	n/a		
Largo delle Terme Gordiane	1 lane	1	car	1	illegal & legal	n/a	n/a		
Via Albona	1 lane	1	car	3	legal diag.	tree barrier	n/a		
Via Buie D'Istria	1 lane	2	car	2	legal streetside/illegal sidewalk parking	n/a	n/a		
Via Isola D'Istria	1 lane	1	car	1	illegal & legal	n/a	n/a		
Via Pisino	1 lane	1	car	1	illegal & legal	n/a	n/a		
Via Cittanova D'Istria	1 lane	1	car	1	illegal & legal	n/a	n/a		
Via Sacile	1 lane	1	car	1	illegal & legal	n/a	n/a		
Via Rovigno D'Istria	2 lane	1	car	3	legal streetside/center lane parking	n/a	n/a	w/ Via Prenestina	
Via Lussimpiccilo	1 lane	1	car	1		n/a	n/a		
Viale della Serenissima	6 lane	5	bus/car	4	parking lots	tree barrier	Bus (#541)	w/ Via Prenestina	
Via Cherso	1 lane	1	car	4	double parking	n/a	n/a	w/ Viale della Serenissima	

