

Global Islam and Local Action: Muslim Spatiality in Contemporary Napoli

NICOLA DI MAURO (University of Naples “L’Orientale”)

Abstract

In contemporary Napoli, Muslim spatiality is mainly located in the extended area of *piazza* Garibaldi. Seven Islamic places of worship, generally called mosques, stand there; in this area halal markets can be easily found; and it is there that Islamic forms of public life are mainly visible, including celebrations for the Islamic holidays. The aim of this paper is to shed light on the ways in which that social space (LEFEBVRE 1991) is produced, experienced, conceived, and imagined by the Muslim communities and the leadership of the Islamic centers. The local scale is embedded in global processes related to social, economic, and political change, and to religiously oriented action of transnational subjects, whether they are institutions, movements or individuals. Based on the theoretical frameworks of Global Islam and Global History, the discussion provides an analysis taking into account different scales. Therefore, the paper pays attention to *connections, relations, systemic integration on a global scale* (CONRAD 2016), and to the “shared use of the opportunities of globalization” (GREEN 2020, 18). This paper is based on fieldwork that is still ongoing as part of a broader research project. The fieldwork consists of participant observation—attending political-religious activities, Islamic holidays, worship and celebrations, public discussions, meetings, and initiatives—and in-depth interviews with the Muslim leadership of Neapolitan Islamic associations and members of the city’s government.

Key words: Contemporary Islam, Muslim Spatiality, Islam in Italy, Muslims in Naples, Global Islam in Southern Europe.

Introduction

There is no database for religious affiliation in Italy. Therefore, knowing the exact number of Muslims in the country and in Napoli (Naples) is challenging. Considering this premise and the calculation method used by statistical studies,¹ it can be said that there are

1 Statistics use the calculation method based on the residents’ nationality, which contains a clear margin of error due to the religious pluralism of the immigrant residents’ countries of origin, including Islamic majority ones, and to the growing number of Italian Muslim citizens (e.g. immigrants with acquired citizenship and their descendants, converts and their descendants). Even though some studies estimate the number of Muslims in Italy by counting Italian Muslims (CIOCCA 2018, 2023), here I prefer to use

approximately 15,000 non-citizen Muslims living in Napoli as of April 2023 (data provided by the City of Napoli) out of an overall 1.5 million non-citizen Muslims in Italy (CARITAS-MIGRANTES 2022). Additionally, there are Italian (citizen) Muslims and irregular Muslim immigrants who greatly increase the overall figure. It is a fact, however, that Muslims constitute one of the largest religious minorities as well as diverse and complex communities in terms of composition, organization, orientation, and relations.

In light of the above, data about territorial distribution cannot but be approximate. Furthermore, the most up-to-date statistics are broken down by municipalities (administrative units of the City) and not by districts.² Nonetheless, it is possible to pinpoint the districts where Muslims tend to live by combining existing data. These fall within the extended area of *piazza* (square) Garibaldi, also known as *Ferrovia* (literally “railway”) according to urban studies spatial classification (AMATO 2009; LAINO 2022a, 2022b; ABBAMONTE, ARENA, PACELLI 2022a, 2022b)—for in it lie the central railway and Napoli’s main transport hub. The extended area of *piazza* Garibaldi lies within the boundaries of the second and fourth municipalities. These include the San Lorenzo, Mercato, and Pendino districts. Data concerning immigrants’ territorial distribution provided by the City of Napoli in 2017 (COMUNE DI NAPOLI, SERVIZIO STATISTICA 2017) shows that Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, nearly all Muslims, make up two of the ten largest groups, and reside primarily in the San Lorenzo, Mercato, and Pendino districts. This trend seems to be confirmed by the latest data released by City of Napoli according to which 3,682 Pakistanis and 2,227 Bangladeshis (as of April 2023) reside in Napoli, while other dominant Muslim immigrants come from the Maghreb region (Algerians, Moroccans, and Tunisians make up a total of 2,239 – as of April 2023) and Senegal (1,295 as of April, 2023); the combination of this data and a 2019 report by IOM (International Organization for Migration) and Prefettura di Napoli indicates that most Algerians, Moroccans, Tunisians, and Senegalese live in the second and fourth municipalities, covering the extended area of *piazza* Garibaldi. Around it, where the borders of the San Lorenzo, Mercato, and Pendino districts meet, seven mosques stand (DI MAURO 2023).³

data provided by local and national statistical institutes. Besides, defining who is Muslim is controversial in terms of negotiated identities and belonging, especially in non-Islamic spaces/territories such as Europe. A huge academic literature exists about the topic that is beyond the scope of this paper; for the Italian case see ALLIEVI, GUOLO, RHAZZALI 2017; RICUCCI 2017, SALIH 2003.

- 2 Napoli demographic services have released detailed data about the territorial distribution of the largest non-citizen communities updated to 31st Dec. 2016. I had access to still non-released data updated to April 2023, broken down by municipalities and not by districts, and provided by demographic services and the welfare department of the City of Napoli at my request. In addition to the figures mentioned, I am also referring to a 2019 report by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Prefettura di Napoli that examines migration in the city’s fourth municipality.
- 3 Muslims in Napoli are predominantly Sunnis, as well as their religious associations, the Islamic centers, and the places of worship mentioned in this paper.



Distribution of mosques in Napoli. Map produced by Emiliano Esposito based on data collected by the author.

Can the extended area of *piazza* Garibaldi be viewed as a social space recognizable as Islamic by Muslim communities? Is that space produced (LEFEBVRE 1991) in religious terms as well? In other words, I shall try to discuss how the extended area of *piazza* Garibaldi is experienced by Muslim communities, how it is conceived through the lens of the religious perspective along with the subjects (institutions, movements, individuals etc.) relatable to Global Islam, and what impact the latter have had on the production of space and the religiously oriented action at the local scale.

I shall try to answer these questions in the following pages by considering Muslim subjectivity, notwithstanding its diversity, as an important vector of organization and transformation: it does not merely set up Islamic spaces devoted to worship; it produces the social space (LEFEBVRE 1991) along with other subjects in a context of uneven and mobile relations (FOUCAULT 1978) and by adapting to a changing context (AMATO 2017, DI MAURO 2023).

To this purpose, the first paragraph provides the theoretical and methodological framework. The second paragraph will discuss the Muslim spatiality in Napoli, namely the extended area of *piazza* Garibaldi, and the positioning of a segment of the Muslim leadership concerning it. Finally, in the conclusion, I will try to summarize the first data arising from fieldwork, which is still ongoing as part of a broader research project.⁴

⁴ This paper is one of the outcomes of the ongoing research project entitled “Islam and Muslims in

At the Intersection of Subjects and Scales

According to Green, “Rather than producing a single unified Islam, globalization has enabled an incrementally increasing range of religious actors to distribute widely divergent programs of how the world’s Muslims should conduct their personal, social, and sometimes political lives. What the many contrasting contributors to global Islam have in common is not a standard set of beliefs or practices, but their shared use of the opportunities of globalization” (GREEN 2020: 18).

What are the elements that define Islam as “global”? Considering the Global History debate, we can add *connections, relations, and systemic integration on a global scale* (CONRAD 2016) to the “shared use of the opportunities of globalization”.

Two specific elements of Muslim communities in non-Islamic space (specifically in Napoli) help gain a better understanding of the multi-scale dimension of complex processes: 1. the composition of communities and political-religious leadership; 2. the alleged oneness and the space-time continuum of the *umma*⁵ (PELLITTERI 2008; CESARI 2008).

Muslims in Napoli are mostly immigrants permanently settled in the city, with long-term residence, or in transit. Compositions as such highlight the *connections* between different spatialities, just as they do in all migration cases—it is no coincidence that several studies of Global History deal with migration (CONRAD 2016). Similarly, even though the *umma* is well-known for its plurality, its alleged oneness and space-time continuum play an important role in Islamic thought, law, and action; this enables an easier grasp of the *systemic integration* processes. According to Cesari:

As far as their connections to Muslims in the West, global trends in Islam can be loosely divided into two types. The first can be termed diasporic, insofar as it is characterized by ties between immigrant communities and their countries of origin. In this case, either official state organs or specific religious agents from the country of origin provide religious interpretations for these diaspora communities, disseminating nationalized versions of Islam throughout the West [...]. The second trend in the propagation of Islamic thought consists of theological and political movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood, the Jamaat Tabligh, or the Wahabis, which emphasize a universal link to the community of believers (*umma*) instead of national communities. Today, conditions for the free movement of people and ideas and the decline of national ideologies make the *umma* even more compelling as an identity marker. Although the diversification of interpretation tends to lead to a proliferation of independent sects in religions such as Protestantism, the unity of the *umma* is generally successfully maintained as an imagined and constantly renewed community founded on a shared fate (CESARI 2008: 166-167).

Now the question is: is it possible to carry out research on a local scale aiming to analyze global processes (e.g., Global Islam processes)? According to Conrad, “Far more common,

Contemporary Naples”, directed by Prof. Carlo De Angelo, and conducted on behalf of the Asian, African and Mediterranean Studies Department of the University of Naples “L’Orientale”.

5 *Umma* is the Arabic noun for the Muslim community.

and in many cases also more rewarding, are studies that analyze one concrete subject in its spatial and social specificity, and at the same time position it in global contexts. The most fascinating questions are often those that arise at the intersection between global processes and their local manifestations” (CONRAD 2016: 129). So the answer to that question would be yes, it is indeed possible, and, as Kong states in her reflection directed at geographers, it is preferable to shift the analysis between different scales: “geographers might well be nudged to consider how the politics of mosque building, or conflicts arising from secular representations of religious community, or modifications to spaces of worship—as micro-geographies and micropolitics—contribute to an understanding of the more macro-scale conflicts in the world. Similarly, in analysing and seeking an understanding of these macro-scale geopolitical tensions, insights may be drawn from careful analyses of the everyday microscale” (KONG 2010: 763).

The analysis of *one concrete subject in its spatial and social specificity* also uncovers specific processes or positionings that need to be taken into account alongside the local manifestations of global processes. Besides the *connections* on different scales (local, regional, national, transnational, and global), and the uneven *relations* between different subjects (social, political, religious, and institutional) that produce the social space, Islamic associations in Napoli seem to enjoy a certain degree of autonomy with respect to *systemic integration* processes regarding Global Islam. In this respect, the *histoire croisée* approach (WERNER & ZIMMERMANN 2006) appears to be heuristically useful: paying attention to the historical dimension of the subjects and of the intersection among them, rather than the synchronic aspects, allows us to identify specificities that would otherwise go undetected. By considering the historical dimension of the intersections between subjects and scales, the aim is to combine the analysis of global processes with specific dynamics of interaction.

As stated above, seven mosques stand in the extended area of *piazza* Garibaldi. ‘Mosque’ is the generic noun for different places of worship. According to Allievi, it might be said that there are four “ethnic *musallas*”⁶ out of seven mosques in Napoli. The other three are Islamic centers with a strong inter-ethnic character.

By Islamic center we mean a center of significant size, which has, in addition to the function of prayer and worship, a number of social and cultural functions through various forms of gathering (a Koranic school, courses and opportunities for adults, women and converts to meet; conferences and other educational and cultural activities), usually conducted in rooms separate from the prayer hall itself. Such a center also carries out the activities of institutional and symbolic representation of Muslims. Islamic centers are a small but important part of what we call mosques. [...] Not infrequently they perform a centralizing function of representation at a provincial

6 *Muṣallā* [pl. *muṣallāyāt*] is the Arabic noun for the space used for the prayer. According to Allievi “They may only serve to host the activity of prayer, but more often than not other activities are also performed there (eg Koranic schools and other educational events). Within this category we also find ‘ethnic’ *musallas*, which are attended only by members of one ethnic group, usually on the grounds of language (non-Arabophone ethnic groups, for example)” (ALLIEVI 2010: 16). Among the four “ethnic *musallas*” in Napoli, one is Senegalese, one is Pakistani, and two are run by the Bangladeshi community.

or regional level. Usually, they also organize special meetings, for example those relating to Islamic holidays (ALLIEVI 2010: 15-16).

In this paper, I focus on Napoli's three Islamic centers and how their leadership is positioned for two main reasons. As Allievi pointed out, these centers generate institutional and symbolic representations of Muslims; in their activities, they give a major contribution to the definition and production of the social space. Furthermore, the three Islamic centers have more significant historical trajectories in terms of relations with the societal, political, and religious landscape of the city. I am not implying that "ethnic *musallas*" are not part of this process, but rather I am making a methodological choice based on the different role that each Islamic association plays. In other words, the focus here is on the representations of Muslims and of the spaces in which they live and act, both symbolic and productive. The Muslim leadership of Islamic centers plays a crucial role in generating these representations through their relationships with the societal, political, and religious landscape.

Page | 146

A methodological issue concerning sources exists as well. To our knowledge, Islamic associations in Napoli do not produce materials that would allow a textual analysis on a variety of topics (e.g., journals, magazines, bulletins, etc.). Newspaper articles, administrative measures addressing religious needs, and Islamic association notices are among the sources consulted. It was, therefore, necessary to carry out the fieldwork using sociological methods (AVALLONE 2017; KAUFFMAN 2009; SEMI, BOLZONI 2022) in order to interview the political-religious leaders about the past and the present. Fieldwork is still ongoing as part of a broader research project. Through participant observation, I have been attending political-religious activities, Islamic holidays, worship and celebrations, public discussions, meetings, and initiatives with the Muslim leadership of Neapolitan Islamic associations since 2019. In this paper I refer to about thirty in-depth interviews, five of which with members of the city's government, bearing in mind that:

oral history is a work of relationship; in the first place, a relationship between the past and the present, an effort to establish, through memory and narrative, what the past means to the present; then a relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee, and between the oral form of the narrative and the written or audiovisual form of historian's product (PORTELLI 2009: 21).

Muslim Spatiality in Napoli

Geographers have been studying the urban changes and re-significations of space triggered by immigrant communities in Napoli since the 1990s (AMATO 1992, 1997, DINES 2002). The latest academic works have updated the research and confirmed trends highlighted since the beginning of such academic interest (LAINO 2022a, 2022b; ABBAMONTE, ARENA, PACELLI 2022a, 2022b). This scientific production suggests that *piazza* Garibaldi's extended area is constantly changing (AMATO 2017) due to immigrants' individual and collective actions; immigrant housing and businesses are centered in this urban space which has become a key economic, political, social, and religious space for them. In such academic production there is no specific focus on the religious aspect of urban changes and re-signification of the space.

Francesco Chiodelli has worked on Muslim spatiality in Italian cities by analyzing the case study of Milano. According to this scholar and based on the urban studies perspective, four main landmarks of Islam can be identified in Italian cities: places of worship, halal butcheries, burial-places, and forms of public life (CHIODELLI 2015). Even though Napoli has designated an area within the Poggioreale cemetery for Islamic burial, administrative obstacles have prevented its opening.⁷ The three other landmarks can be found mainly in the extended area of *piazza* Garibaldi. Immigrant-owned shops in the San Lorenzo, Mercato, and Pendino districts include ones owned by Muslims that sell halal products (halal food, clothes, etc.—not just meat slaughtered following Islamic law). As noted, seven Islamic places of worship, generally called mosques, stand there. Furthermore, it is there that Islamic forms of public life are mainly visible. According to Chiodelli, Islamic forms of public life consist of the corporeal signs of Islam (i.e., Islamic headscarf and clothes, ways of wearing the beard) and the written and spoken language, namely the Arabic language used for the signs of shops and places of worship around the districts (CHIODELLI 2015). The Islamic holidays celebrated in *piazza* Garibaldi by Napoli's Muslims might be added as another form of public life. Considering the landmarks mentioned by Chiodelli, it might be said that the extended area of *piazza* Garibaldi is, in all respects, the place in which Muslim spatiality takes shape. It could be defined to some extent as partially Islamic at least from the urban studies perspective.⁸ What about the definition and production of that space by Muslims?

The contemporary globalized context is characterized by a greater mobility that has given rise to significant Muslim minorities in non-Muslim countries, including in Europe. As stated above, the question posed from a historical perspective aims at identifying the elements that define Islam as 'global'. A question that needs to be added is how different Muslim subjects (institutions, movements, individuals etc.) define and produce the space in a globalized non-Muslim context. More precisely, for the purposes of the research, how Muslim leaders in Napoli define and, along with the local Muslim associations and communities, produce the space in which they live and act, with special focus on the extended area of *piazza* Garibaldi.

Italian Muslims hosted in non-Muslim territory

The oldest Islamic center in Napoli is the Islamic Community of Napoli (*Comunità Islamica di Napoli*) founded as the Islamic Community of the South (*Comunità Islamica del Sud*) in 1990 on the initiative of Muslim students mainly from the Middle East.⁹ Its first location was in *via* (street) Parma 54, close to *piazza* Nazionale, once again in the extended area of *piazza* Garibaldi. As the number of Muslims grew, a larger place of worship was needed. Four years after its foundation, the Islamic Community of Napoli moved to *corso* (high street) Lucci 54, the historic location of the Islamic center, in the Mercato district. The last move

⁷ Poggioreale is a district of the eastern part of Napoli, it falls under the fourth municipality. For the topic mentioned here see below the paragraph "Imagined Islamic Spaces: The Purpose-Built Mosque and the Islamic Cemetery".

⁸ According to Chiodelli, the landmarks may be considered "as paradigmatic of the Muslim presence in the Italian cities, since it is they that make the urban presence of Islam most visible to the 'autochthonous population'" (CHIODELLI 2015: 21).

⁹ The first Muslim immigrants to arrive in Napoli at the turn of the 1970s and 80s were mostly students coming from Syria, Palestine and Jordan, data consistent with the national trend (FERRARI 2008).

was in 2021: since then the oldest Islamic center in Napoli has been based in *via Spaventa*, on premises owned and no longer rented, right on the South side of *piazza Garibaldi*, next to another Islamic place of worship founded and run by the Pakistani community. Since its foundation, the Islamic Community of Napoli has been embedded in the network¹⁰ ascribable to the European Muslim Brotherhood. It was indeed founded by Muslim students who at that time were involved in the Union of Muslim Students in Italy (*Unione degli Studenti Musulmani in Italia* – USMI), whose experience resulted in the Union of Islamic Communities of Italy (*Unione delle Comunità Islamiche d'Italia* – UCOII) in 1990. The latter is still one of the most important and representative Islamic organizations on the national scale; it has partner organizations that deal with the production and dissemination of religious knowledge such as the Italian Islamic Association of Imams and Religious Guides (*Associazione Italiana Islamica degli Imam e delle Guide Religiose*); it is part of the Federation of Islamic Organizations of Europe (*Fédération des Organisations Islamiques en Europe* – FOIE – then *Conseil des Musulmans d'Europe*), the network ascribable to the European Muslim Brotherhood (BRIGNONE 2019). Even though its leadership, namely its imam and president Amar Abdallah,¹¹ was formerly involved in that network, today the Islamic Community of Napoli has no direct affiliation with it. It has no affiliation and no prevailing interpretations, orientations, or tendencies; it could heed opinions and comments expressed by various Muslim scholars or organizations, including the European Council for Fatwa and Research (ECFR) based in Dublin.¹² The latter is a private foundation founded in 1997, established on the initiative of FOIE, and run by Muslim scholars who produce the *fiqh* for Muslims living in a minority context, specifically in Europe, the *fiqh al-aqalliyāt*,¹³ the ECFR is a reference for the organizations embedded in the network ascribable to the European Muslim Brotherhood, such as UCOII. About the ECFR, Albrecht states that:

Notwithstanding the broad variety of their national origins, professional backgrounds, *madhāhib*,¹⁴ and positions in the field of contemporary Islamic discourse, the body of members has been characterized as “close to the ‘middle-ground’ (*wasatīyya*) ethos of Yusuf al-Qaradawi and the Muslim Brotherhood”.¹⁵ The Council embraces representatives of the four major Sunni schools and follows an explicitly eclectic approach—known as *talfīq*—by borrowing from different legal traditions and thus crossing the boundaries between the *madhāhib*. Although this approach is not untested within the ECFR, the Council’s leadership regards it as crucial for facilitating

¹⁰ Extensive academic literature exists regarding Muslim networks. The essential text about Muslim networks in and across Europe is ALLIEVI & NIELSEN 2003.

¹¹ I do not use the scientific transliteration from Arabic for the names of Muslim leaders in Napoli here and beyond. I prefer the form normally used by them and by which they are known.

¹² Interview with Amar Abdallah at the Islamic Community of Napoli in *via Spaventa*, 28th February 2023.

¹³ *Fiqh al-aqalliyāt* was first used in 1990 by Ġād al-Ĥaqq ‘Alī Ġād al-Ĥaqq (DE ANGELO 2011, 81). See also CAEIRO 2010; DE ANGELO 2013; DE ANGELO & TOLINO 2017.

¹⁴ *Madhāhib* (sing. *madhhab*) is the Arabic noun for the so-called Islamic schools of law, the main Sunni ones being the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi‘i, and Hanbali.

¹⁵ CAEIRO 2011: 87, quoted by ALBRECHT 2018: 175-176.

the revival of *ijtihād*,¹⁶ particularly in the minority context, and, more generally, for appealing to a wider audience beyond traditional *madhhab* divisions (ALBRECHT 2018: 175-176).

Muslim scholars within the ECFR have developed a significant debate regarding spaces/territories according to Islamic categories. In doing so, they used classical definitions and deployed new ones. By reshaping the classical Islamic categories in line with the historical development of geopolitical realities, Muslim scholars within the ECFR agree on the main criterion to define the *dār al-islām* (the abode/territory of Islam) that is the demographic one. Therefore, *dār al-islām* basically corresponds to Muslim majority countries, while the West can be defined as *ghayr dār al-islām*, a non-Islamic territory, outside the *dār al-islām*. Regarding the latter, the effort of Muslim scholars within the ECFR has been devoted to providing more specific definitions.¹⁷ Regarding the relations with the organizations of the network ascribable to the European Muslim Brotherhood, specifically the UCOII, the FOIE, and the ECFR, Amar Abdallah is keen to point out that the Islamic Community of Napoli is independent. He states that “No party, transnational or national group is allowed to direct our efforts”.¹⁸ Furthermore, Amar Abdallah adds that UCOII played an important role in the formation of the Islamic Community of Napoli, but the relationship with the Italian and Neapolitan society has evolved into a more autonomous one due to the emergence of new needs and duties.¹⁹ In this sense, the relations with the local context and its subjects (both intra- and extra-community subjects, i.e. local Muslim communities and associations, local organizations and institutions) are more crucial than the relations with Muslim national and transnational networks. Indeed, this is most noticeable in definition and production of the social space. With regard to the Muslim spatiality in Napoli and the extended area of *piazza Garibaldi*, Amar Abdallah stated that “We are Italian Muslims, we speak Italian. This is Italian territory. So, one has to understand what the law is and to comply with it”.²⁰ Besides, he said that Muslims are welcomed and hosted in Italy. He pointed out that the activities of the Islamic Community of Napoli are attended by Muslims coming from more than 20 different countries, and it’s also for this reason that there is no prevailing interpretations, orientations, or tendencies.

Three aspects arise from his stance. First, the Islamic Community of Napoli is independent and autonomous, it has no direct affiliation, despite its historical relations with national and transnational Islamic organizations; it does not refer to a single scholar, group, entity, or organization. Secondly, the words about Italian Muslims on the one hand, and the

16 *Ijtihād* is the Arabic word which defines the Muslim scholars’ “effort” to produce an interpretation of Islamic sources, the Koran and the Sunna.

17 For a summary of the debate and definitions, see ALBRECHT 2018. It is beyond the scope of this paper to evaluate the impact of this kind of debate on the religiously oriented action, and the definition and production of the social space at the local level. The topic will be extended and further discussed in following publications.

18 Interview with Amar Abdallah at the Islamic Community of Napoli in *via Spaventa*, 23rd February 2023. Translated from Italian into English by the author.

19 *Ibid.*

20 *Ibid.*

idea of Muslims being welcomed and hosted on the other, are only apparently in conflict: the point here is indeed that Muslims (at least residents if not citizens) are at the same time part of the Neapolitan society and part of a religious minority “hosted” in a non-Muslim territory. Finally, Muslims must comply with the Italian law and with the rules of the local government and institutions.

Mosque Entrance as the Limit

After taking part in the activities of the Islamic Community of Napoli for a long time, a group founded the Cultural Association for Dialogue, Coexistence and Peace (*Associazione Culturale per il Dialogo, la Convivenza e la Pace*) in 2010. According to its president, Muhammad Hasayen, the reason behind their decision was the need to break down the barriers between religions and create a more open and welcoming environment.²¹ A contention within the leadership of the Islamic Community of Napoli is, in fact, more plausible,²² although dialogue, coexistence and peace are core elements in the discourse, perspectives, and actions of the newborn association. The first location of the Cultural Association for Dialogue, Coexistence and Peace was on two floors of a building in *via Cosenz*, south of *piazza Garibaldi*, one for worship and the other for the education and recreation of the youth.²³ After a few years, as the number of activities and participants increased, the leadership’s intent to purchase premises for an Islamic center arose. Through fundraising and the support of UCOII, to which the group is officially affiliated, the association purchased premises in *via Torino* in 2017, north of *piazza Garibaldi*, resulting in what is now known simply as the mosque of peace (*Masğid al-Salām, Moschea della Pace*). It is the first owned mosque in Napoli and, along with the owned premises of the Islamic Community of Napoli in *via Spaventa*, it is a clear sign of the stabilization process of the Muslim communities in the city. Muhammad Hasayen, president of the association as well as imam of the mosque of peace, arrived in Napoli during the 1980s and has been tied to the network ascribable to the European Muslim Brotherhood since then. More precisely, he has played an active role in UCOII since its foundation. Despite the strong relations with UCOII and its networks, Muhammad Hasayen highlights how the diverse make-up of the community that refers to the mosque of peace has resulted in a plural religious leadership with no prevailing interpretations, orientations, or tendencies.²⁴ Unlike Amar Abdallah for the Islamic Community of Napoli, Muhammad Hasayen is not the sole imam of the Islamic center in *via Torino*.

As we raised funds to purchase the mosque, we called on all Islamic associations to contribute, declaring that our mosque would be everyone’s mosque. Those who had a minimum level of religious knowledge and participated in the collection have already performed the *khutba*.²⁵ Different imams perform the *khutba* at the mosque of peace

21 Interview with Muhammad Hasayen at the mosque of peace in *via Torino*, 1st February 2020.

22 Information about the contention within the leadership of the Islamic Community of Napoli was collected during informal encounters and was not covered in the interviews.

23 Interview with Muhammad Hasayen at the mosque of peace in *via Torino*, 1st February 2020.

24 Ibid.

25 *Khutba* is the Arabic noun for the sermon performed by the imam during the collective prayer on Friday and during Islamic holidays.

nowadays, each of whom has a connection to the community and the territory. In addition to the Arab imams, a Bangladeshi imam, a Beninese imam, and a Senegalese imam alternate to ensure multiple references are available to the entire composite community.²⁶

As mentioned above, the mosque of peace is officially affiliated to UCOII, which has a strong reference in the ECFR and the *fiqh* for Muslims living in a minority context, specifically in Europe, that it has produced and disseminated. Regarding the Muslim spatiality in Napoli and the extended area of *piazza* Garibaldi, Muhammad Hasayen states that “The streets are not Islamic, even if there are a lot of Muslims here.²⁷ The limit of the *dār al-islām* is the mosque entrance”.²⁸ In his view, relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in a non-Muslim context must be based on mutual trust, and the community that refers to the mosque of peace and its leadership show their willingness by engaging dialogue with the residents of the San Lorenzo district (where the mosque of peace stands), and by complying with the Italian law and with the rules of the local government and institutions.²⁹

Three aspects of Muhammad Hasayen’s positioning could be emphasized here too: 1. despite the direct affiliation to UCOII and therefore to the ECFR and transnational network ascribable to the European Muslim Brotherhood, there are no prevailing interpretations, orientations, or tendencies due to the multiple make-up of the community that refers to the mosque of peace; 2. the mosque, more precisely the Islamic center, is certainly an Islamic space outside of which, in Napoli and the extended area of *piazza* Garibaldi, Muslims are in a non-Muslim territory; 3. Muslims in a non-Muslim territory must comply with the law and rules of the national and local governments and institutions.

Mosque Entrance as a Porous Border

The Islamic Cultural Association Zayd Ibn Tābit (*Associazione Culturale Islamica Zayd Ibn Tābit*), known simply as the mosque of *piazza* Mercato, is probably the best-known Islamic place of worship in Napoli thanks to its peculiar history and its relations with the Neapolitan society. The mosque is located in *via* Corradino di Svevia, north of *piazza* Mercato, in the Pendino district, again in the extended area of *piazza* Garibaldi. The premises of the Islamic center are owned by the City of Napoli and granted on loan for free use to the Zayd Ibn Tābit Association. It was founded in the late 1990s by a group in which the Neapolitan converts have had a leading role since then. Hamza Boccolini has led the Association in its initial phase; Agostino Yassine Gentile, who studied in Saudi Arabia, was the imam of the mosque of *piazza* Mercato until his recent move to Reggio Emilia, northern Italy; Massimo Abdallah Cozzolino is the president of the Zayd Ibn Tābit Association today. The mosque of *piazza* Mercato is well-known thanks also to the documentary work about Neapolitan converts to

26 Interview with Muhammad Hasayen at the mosque of peace in *via* Torino, 11th February 2023. Translated from Italian into English by the author.

27 The word “here” stands for Napoli and the extended area of *piazza* Garibaldi on which the interview was focused.

28 Interview with Muhammad Hasayen at the mosque of peace in *via* Torino, 11th February 2023. Translated from Italian into English by the author.

29 Ibid.

Islam produced by the journalist Ernesto Pagano and entitled *Napolislam* (PAGANO 2015: 2016). This work drew the attention of the public debate and the interest of some researchers. Indeed, there is no academic literature on Muslim communities in contemporary Napoli, except for few works on Neapolitan converts published by anthropologists (DI NUZZO 2017, 2020, GALLETTI 2015). The mosque of *piazza* Mercato has not had an official affiliation to a national Islamic organization until it joined the Italian Islamic Confederation (*Confederazione Islamica Italiana* – CII) of which Massimo Abdallah Cozzolino is the general secretary. The CII was founded in 2012, it is one of the most representative Islamic organizations on the national scale along with UCOII, and it is backed by the Kingdom of Morocco and its institutional device in charge of the Moroccans Abroad (DI MAURO 2021). It is worth mentioning that the largest national community among the Muslim immigrants in Italy and in Campania Region (*Regione Campania*, regional administrative institution) is the Moroccan one (420 thousand in Italy according to CARITAS-MIGRANTES 2022; about 23 thousand in Campania according to ISTAT 2023); along with a part of it, the Moroccan institutional device operates in the Italian Islamic religious field by providing financial support, religious personnel as well as access to religious knowledge. The CII, therefore, refers to the Kingdom of Morocco and its official version of Islam made up of the Maliki school of law, the Ashari doctrine, and the Sufi spirituality, defined as moderate, tolerant, and more compatible with the non-Muslim context (DI MAURO 2021, 2022). The Ministry of Islamic Affairs plays a key role in the Moroccan institutional device in charge of the Moroccans Abroad; the European Council of the Moroccan ‘Ulamā’ (*al-Mağlis al-Ūrūbī lil-‘Ulamā’ al-Mağāriba, Conseil Européen des Oulémas Marocains* – CEOM), created in 2008 and based in Brussels, depends on it. The CEOM is the Moroccan institution producing advice for Muslims living in Europe, its president is a member of the Moroccan Supreme Council of the ‘Ulamā’ (*al-Mağlis al-A‘lā lil-‘Ulamā’, Conseil Supérieur des Oulémas*) created in 1981, headed by the king—the sole body with the legitimacy to release *fatāwā*³⁰ for Moroccan Muslims inside and outside the borders of the country. Taher Tujgani,³¹ president of the CEOM, released a text in Arabic in 2020 entitled “The Relation of the Muslim with the non-Muslim in Islam”, resumed then in 2023 in the French version entitled “The Islamic Principles of the Coexistence”,³² in which he lists and explains six principles that regulate the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims according to the Islamic sources: brotherhood, equality, mutual awareness, mutual respect, benevolence, and justice. The *ṣayh*³³ stresses the need for dialogue especially among people of monotheistic religions (*ahl al-adyān al-samāwiyya*, literally “people of the celestial religions”) who live in one single territory (*fī bayt wāḥid kabīr*, literally “in one big house”). Taher Tujgani suggests that the historical developments (with special emphasis on technology, communication, and

30 *Fatwā* (pl. *fatāwā*) is the Arabic word for legal opinion or response.

31 As for the names of Muslim leaders in Napoli, I do not use the scientific transliteration from Arabic for the name here. I prefer the form usually used by him and with which he is known.

32 My translation from Arabic and French into English. The title in Arabic is *‘Alāqat al-Muslim bi-Ġayr al-Muslim fī l-Islām*; text available at: <https://tinyurl.com/4e4befyr> (last accessed, October 14th, 2023). The title of the resumed French version is *Les Soubassements Islamiques du Vivre Ensemble*; text available at: <https://tinyurl.com/ynrzw5t7> (last accessed, October 14th, 2023).

33 *Ṣayh* has multiple meanings. In this case it is an honorary title given to an expert in Islamic sciences.

inform-ation) of the globalization era have removed temporal and spatial barriers; here the point is the oneness of the increasingly interconnected spaces/territories. Regarding the places of worship in Napoli and the extended area of *piazza* Garibaldi, Massimo Abdallah Cozzolino is in line with the above-mentioned stance: he states that “We must consider outdoor space as a shared space. This is how we engage with the local community. It is crucial to make the place of worship part of the territory, not separated from it”.³⁴ Despite this, the mosque entrance remains a border, even though a porous one. The mosque is an Islamic space that cannot be extended to the outside.³⁵

The mosque of *piazza* Mercato is always open. For instance, during *ramadān* everyone comes, we do food distribution, the public baths are always open to Muslims and non-Muslims. There is also a barbershop inside the mosque. So, anyone can go there. Our concern lies precisely in conceiving this space: how can we allow non-Muslims, often in trouble, who live in the neighborhood to enter the mosque? We allow it as an opportunity to exercise *da’wa*,³⁶ to do a positive action. However, we never thought of doing *da’wa* outside the mosque, perhaps in the *piazza* Garibaldi area.³⁷

Massimo Abdallah Cozzolino is keen to stress the strong autonomy on the local scale, although its role in the CII is central on the national one. Indeed, he states that “The Confederation’s orientation is clear and, in some cases, even steady on some positions. I believe that stressing certain views is a limit because it can give the idea of subordination to a state authority (ed.: the Kingdom of Morocco)”.³⁸ Furthermore, the president of the Zayd Ibn Tābit Association highlights the differences between northern and southern Italy. The Muslim communities in northern Italy are more homogenous in their composition and more stable in terms of social, political, and economic integration. According to Massimo Abdallah Cozzolino, in northern Italy there is often a correspondence between the local Islamic center and the national or transnational organization because of the density of people coming from a single country that refer to a specific place of worship. He states that “We do not have this characteristic as we are a plural association, as we are an association made up of many individuals with different migratory backgrounds”,³⁹ this explains why there are no prevailing interpretations, orientations, or tendencies, and why he is not the sole imam of the Islamic center, as is the case with the mosque of peace in *via* Torino—and unlike the Islamic Community of Napoli in *via* Spaventa. He further stresses that the Italian and Neapolitan leadership is the key element of the Zayd Ibn Tābit Association by saying that the mosque of *piazza* Mercato is open to all parts of the community, and discussions about Islamic majority

³⁴ Interview with Massimo Abdallah Cozzolino (online), 27th May, 2023. Translated from Italian into English by the author.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ *Da’wa* is the Arabic word for mission or calling to God towards both Muslims and non-Muslims.

³⁷ Interview with Massimo Abdallah Cozzolino (online), 27th May, 2023. Translated from Italian into English by the author.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

countries are not reproduced within it.⁴⁰ Finally, he points out that there is a gap between national or transnational Islamic organizations and the local Islamic associations also due to the different needs of the vast majority of Muslims attending the mosques who are not involved in production and dissemination of religious knowledge and practice or in the relations with institutions at the national or transnational scale.⁴¹

The Massimo Abdallah Cozzolino's position can be summarized as follows: 1. despite his central role on the national scale and the official affiliation to the CII, there are no prevailing interpretations, orientations, or tendencies because of the multiple composition of the community that refers to the mosque of *piazza* Mercato; 2. the Islamic center is an Islamic space, Napoli and the extended area of *piazza* Garibaldi is a non-Muslim territory, but the borders are porous since inside and outside the mosque the space is shared with non-Muslims; 3. on the local scale the Islamic association is strongly independent and autonomous due to the peculiarity of the context, there is a gap between the national and transnational Islamic organizations and the local Islamic associations, and therefore between the high-profile action of national and transnational networks and the needs of the Muslims attending mosques.

Imagined Islamic Spaces: The Purpose-Built Mosque and the Islamic Cemetery⁴²

Besides generating institutional and symbolic representations of Muslims at the local scale, the three Islamic centers mentioned above also hold the necessary relations with the political and administrative levels of the City of Napoli and Campania Region to address requests for the worship. Regarding Muslim spatiality, the main issues discussed between Napoli's Islamic centers and the local institutions are two: the purpose-built mosque and the Islamic cemetery.

As stated before, there is no purpose-built mosque in Napoli, that is, a mosque featuring all the elements that characterize Islamic places of worship, including a dome and minaret. According to Muslim leaders of the Islamic centers, it would have been a symbolic place for all Muslims. Under Mayors Pietro Lezzi (1987-1989) and Nello Polese (1990-1992), for the first time the nascent Islamic Community of Napoli asked the city administration for a space suitable for the purpose-built mosque.⁴³ Since then, relations with the city government on the issue have never been interrupted and yet have led to no progress: the center-left city administrations headed by Bassolino (1993-1997), Iervolino (2001-2011) and de Magistris (2011-2021) discussed solutions with Islamic associations but all of them came to nothing due to administrative obstacles and unavailability of suitable sites. One of these unsuccessful solutions was the 2001 proposal to create a purpose-built mosque in Ponticelli, a district in East Napoli, away from the area inhabited by most Muslims, using a part of regional funding for urban regeneration. At that time there were two Islamic

40 Interview with Massimo Abdallah Cozzolino (online), 27th May, 2023.

41 Ibid.

42 The topic of this paragraph will be extended and further discussed in following publications.

43 Interview with Amar Abdallah at the Islamic Community of Napoli in *corso* Lucci, 5th December 2019. The same information can be found in an article published by Tiziana Cozzi in 2010 in the local edition of one of the main Italian newspapers, Repubblica. The article title was "Mosque in the City, Twenty Years of Waiting" (e.d.: author's translation from Italian into English). Here is the link to the newspaper's online archive: <https://tinyurl.com/yzab9wdt> (last accessed October 14th, 2023).

associations in Napoli—the Islamic Community of Napoli and the Islamic Cultural Association Zayd Ibn Tābit, Bassolino was President of the Campania Region, Iervolino was Mayor of Napoli, and the center-right coalition headed by Berlusconi had the majority in Parliament and was leading the national Government. On December 12th, 2001 the Chamber of Deputies (*Camera dei Deputati*, one of the two chambers of the Italian Parliament along with the *Senato*, the Senate) after a heated debate passed a parliamentary resolution (*ordine del giorno*, literally “order of the day”) committing the Government to ask the President of the Campania Region to not allocate funds to the mosque.⁴⁴ The same fate awaited the project aimed at transforming the building of the city’s fish market into the city mosque. The building is in *piazza* Duca degli Abruzzi, in the Mercato district. The proposal put forward by Mayor de Magistris was announced by *il Mattino*, the main city newspaper, in the issue of October 27th, 2012, and failed in the space of few months because of the opposition of the fish market players, who were concerned about the possibility of having to move their businesses out of the area.⁴⁵ Besides, the Nea-politan Islamic associations at that time tried to create a committee for the joint management of the desired, forthcoming city mosque, a first experiment of coordination between different subjectivities and stances which failed also due to the persisting contention among them.⁴⁶

The never-made Islamic cemetery also has a long history that can be traced back to the end of the 1990s, when the Mayor of Naples Bassolino identified an area in the Poggioreale cemetery which was then being used for other purposes.⁴⁷ The Islamic cemetery, however, has been subject to administrative measures years after. It is part of the Poggioreale Cemetery Park Implementation Plan formally adopted by the city administration (DELIBERATIONS n. 1972 of 2006, n. 59 of 2009, n. 1779 of 2010). In the explanatory report dated March 2015 (COMUNE DI NAPOLI, SERVIZIO CIMITERI CITTADINI 2015), the exact area for the Islamic cemetery was identified behind the already present Jewish cemetery. Despite good relations between the Islamic centers and the city government dating back to the 1990s and administrative measures, no progress has been made. The space for Islamic burial became more urgent during the Covid-19 pandemic, when the repatriation of the human remains became extremely difficult due to the rules for containing contagion. The repatriation of human remains is yet the most common, though very expensive practice for Muslim im-migrants; some Islamic majority countries cover the costs; Islamic associations

44 The verbatim report of the debate is available at: <https://tinyurl.com/2bnxfrj> (last accessed October 14th, 2023).

45 Interview with Amar Abdallah at the Islamic Community of Napoli in *corso* Lucci, 5th December 2019. The information concerning the opposition of the fish market players is confirmed by the verbatim reports of the City Council. The issue of securing the building in *piazza* Duca degli Abruzzi for the re-opening of the fish market was discussed in the City Council on several occasions. The verbatim reports are available on the website of the City of Napoli.

46 Information about the contention between Islamic associations and leaderships was collected during informal encounters and was not covered in the interviews. Information about the role of the Islamic associations in the management of the desired purpose-built mosque was collected during the fieldwork. There are not other sources about the role of the Islamic associations in the management of the desired purpose-built mosque because the project never went beyond a generic proposal.

47 Interview with Amar Abdallah at the Islamic Community of Napoli in *corso* Lucci, 5th December 2019.

often collect funds. The leading company in this field in Napoli is the funeral home run by Alessandro Trombetta, who works closely with the local Islamic associations and the Islamic majority countries' consulates, both for the repatriation of human remains and for burials in the Italian territory whenever possible.⁴⁸ The funeral home run by Alessandro Trombetta is capable to do this work in compliance with Islamic law thanks to the presence of Muslim personnel and the collaboration with the Islamic associations during the different phases of the repatriation or the burial procedures.⁴⁹ The problem was and still is how to guarantee burial services for Muslims in Napoli. Enrico Panini, Deputy Mayor in charge of cemeteries in 2020, put forward the idea of an "adoption" of the space, in other words a land rental, by the Neapolitan Islamic associations due to the impossibility of increasing public spending (DI MAURO 2023). The Islamic associations that are supposed to provide the land concession fee in the case of "adoption", do not have the appropriate resources. The net effect is that there is no Islamic cemetery in Napoli.

Page | 156

The purpose-built mosque and the Islamic cemetery are now off the local political agenda and remain merely imagined Islamic spaces. As of today, there are no relations with the new city government,⁵⁰ nor are there formal relations with local institutions, specific institutional bodies or offices. The apparently good political relations of the last thirty years have not become an administrative praxis. Laura Marmorale, who served under Mayor de Magistris as Councilor for Citizenship Rights and Social Cohesion between 2018 and 2019, noted the distance between political praxis and the administrative one: "There is no inclusive administrative praxis in the City of Naples. There is inclusive political praxis: if an imam requests a meeting with the Mayor, the Mayor will meet with him. The imam will be at Palazzo San Giacomo⁵¹ and will bring community requests [to the Administration's attention]. This is not reflected in administrative praxis",⁵²

According to the Muslim leadership of the Islamic centers in Napoli, the purpose-built mosque and the Islamic cemetery would be the most important Islamic spaces in which the exercise of rights related to religious freedom and the compliance with the rules of worship could be fully ensured. However, the City of Napoli lacks a concrete policy on this subject, in spite of the inclusive political discourse and practice mentioned above. Morpurgo discusses the ways in which public administrations in Northeast Italy handle spatial demands connected to religious diversity—mostly conveyed by Muslims. The author states that:

Before considering *how* public administrations handle spatial demands connected to religious diversity, it is necessary to clarify *if* they do so. In this, as in other studies (Dunn, 2004; Kuppinger, 2011), the answer is consistently negative. In none

48 Interview with Alessandro Trombetta at the company headquarters in *via Fontanelle al Trivio*, 28th April 2023.

49 Ibid.

50 During the interviews I conducted, both the representatives of the city administration led by Manfredi and the leaders of Islamic centers have confirmed that there are no relations nowadays. Both subjects are keen to stress that they would be willing to engage in relations if needed.

51 Palazzo San Giacomo is the Napoli's town hall.

52 Interview with Laura Marmorale at *piazza Bellini*, Napoli, March 2020. At the time of the interview, Laura Marmorale was no longer Councilor after a cabinet reshuffle by Mayor de Magistris.

of the nine municipalities, irrespective of size, of the administration's political orientation, and of the number and type of religious groups, does a spatial strategy address the issue of religious diversity. This does not mean that religious groups can locate freely; on the contrary, it means that they are not regarded as meriting public consideration for the provision of religious spaces. (MORPURGO 2021: 79)

The same could be said of the City of Napoli which has no administrative strategy addressing the spatial demands of Muslim communities, as confirmed by Luca Trapanese—Councillor for Welfare, Social Inclusion, and Immigration—and Laura Lieto—Deputy Mayor in charge of Urban Planning under the current Mayor Manfredi.⁵³ Regarding the spatial demands of Muslim communities, to the *avoidance, concealment* and *refusal* strategies of public administrations suggested by Morpurgo (MORPURGO 2021), the lack of administrative initiative and structure combined with political practice should be added, considering the specificities of a changing context (AMATO 2017, DI MAURO 2023) characterized by greater mobility and precarity.

Conclusions

On April 21st, 2023, thousands of Muslims gathered in *piazza* Garibaldi for the *ʿīd al-ḥiṭr* celebrations at the end of *ramaḍān*.⁵⁴ Unlike previous years, there was not a single celebration for all. Some Islamic associations, including the Islamic Cultural Association Zayd Ibn Ṭābit and the Cultural Association for Dialogue, Coexistence and Peace, decided to hold the celebrations in their respective Islamic centers. The Bangladeshi communities on the north side and the Islamic Community of Napoli on the south side gathered on the cobblestone of *piazza* Garibaldi. Many Muslims who reach *piazza* Garibaldi during Islamic holidays do so without notice: they already know that the celebrations are held there every year.⁵⁵ Therefore, *piazza* Garibaldi, the place around which the seven mosques stand and most Muslim live, and where the halal markets can be easily found, is at least socially recognizable as the space of collective religious experience by the Muslim communities in Napoli, a space temporarily and repeatedly sacralized thanks to the celebrations of Islamic holidays, one might say. Mosques, halal markets and Islamic holidays are a hop in the continuity of the non-Islamic space. By paraphrasing Eliade (ELIADE 1984, 27), it can be said that Muslims and Islamic associations have settled in Napoli especially in the extended area of *piazza* Garibaldi, consecrating it to Islamic worship.

However, being in that space is not a religious calling. I already mentioned the territorial distribution of Muslim immigrants in Napoli. The territorial distribution of immigrants often

53 Interview with Luca Trapanese at Palazzo San Giacomo, Napoli, 17th February 2023, and interview with Laura Lieto at Palazzo San Giacomo, Napoli, 1st March 2023.

54 The *ʿīd al-ḥiṭr* is the Islamic holiday for the breaking of the fast celebrated at the end of the month of *ramaḍān*.

55 Information about the Islamic holidays in *piazza* Garibaldi was collected during the fieldwork. I joined the Islamic holidays held in *piazza* Garibaldi (suspended between 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic) between 2019 and 2023.

depends on their nationality, the relative working specialization (ethnicization of workforce, WALLERSTEIN 2012), and their consequent integration into the labor market. As confirmed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies in its official reports, many Muslim immigrants are engaged in the trade sector (wholesale, retail, and street vendors) which in Napoli is mainly located in the extended area of *piazza* Garibaldi, in the San Lorenzo, Mercato and Pendino districts (LAINO 2022a, 2022b; ABBAMONTE, ARENA, PACELLI 2022a, 2022b). In Napoli, San Lorenzo is one of the districts whose inhabitants are mostly immigrants. According to the Italian Revenue Agency (*Agenzia delle Entrate*),⁵⁶ in San Lorenzo, as well as in Mercato and Pendino, rental rates are lower than in other districts, and so more affordable for the low incomes of immigrants, which is particularly relevant since immigrants in Napoli have an even lower standard of living compared to the national average. According to the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies, “While overall in Italy less than a third of employed non-EU citizens receive a monthly salary of less than 800 euros, in Napoli’s metropolitan area the concentration in this salary range reaches an incidence of as much as 56.3 %. Conversely, only 16.7% of non-EU employees receive salaries exceeding 1,200 euros (a percentage that rises to 32.7% at the national level), while 27.7% receive salaries ranging from 801 to 1,200 euros (ed.: translated from Italian into English by the author)” (MINISTERO DEL LAVORO E DELLE POLITICHE SOCIALI 2020: 26).⁵⁷ The labor market and low rental rates are the two most important factors behind the territorial distribution of immigrants (Muslim immigrants for what interests us) in the extended area of *piazza* Garibaldi. In other words, the social space we are talking about contains the social relations of production (LEFEBVRE 1991).

Muslim communities, in their uneven and mobile relations with the social, political, economic, and institutional subjects of the city, produce a social space made of material conditions and division of labor. At the same time, they produce a central space for the individual and collective religious experience. That center, as noted, is not home to the purpose-built mosque and the Islamic cemetery, which are off the local political and administrative agenda today, despite thirty years of attempts. The purpose-built mosque and the Islamic cemetery are imagined Islamic spaces. According to Knott, “In addition to the extensive, diachronic nature of a place, there are also its synchronic interconnections with other similar and co-existing sites, real and imagined, to which a place may be connected by the movement of people and capital, and the flow of communications and ideas” (KNOTT 2010: 36). If the final spatial property is power (KNOTT 2010: 36), Muslim spatiality—produced, experienced and imagined—in Napoli depends on the complex power relations that are in place. In this context, the leadership of the Islamic centers highlight that Muslims must comply with the Italian law and with the rules of the local government and institutions. And in this sense, this stance is an ordering principle according to which Muslim communities are conceived as being always “hosted”.

The three Islamic centers considered here have relations and connections with different national and transnational organizations or institutions, they are embedded in networks that

⁵⁶ Revenue Agency—data here: <http://tinyurl.com/yj9jahrz> (last accessed Oct. 14, 2023).

⁵⁷ The most updated reports released by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies do not include data about salary range. See MINISTERO DEL LAVORO E DELLE POLITICHE SOCIALI 2021, 2022.

cross borders and interfere with different scales. Subjects like the network ascribable to the European Muslim Brotherhood or the Moroccan institutional device tend to spread their political-religious approaches. The Islamic centers are certainly receptive of such production, which falls within the Global Islam processes (GREEN 2020, CESARI 2008). They also seem to enjoy a certain degree of autonomy in deploying their local action and the Muslim spatiality in Napoli. The political-religious leaders of the Islamic centers in Napoli define the city and the extended area of *piazza* Garibaldi as a non-Islamic territory, albeit differently. They consider how specific subjects, namely both intra- and extra-community subjects (i.e. local Muslim communities and associations, local organizations and institutions), and spaces, namely the local scale, Napoli and the extended area of *piazza* Garibaldi, intersect. By doing so, they adapt a religiously oriented action to a changing context (AMATO 2017, DI MAURO 2023). There is, therefore, a *systemic integration on a global scale* in terms of relations, production and dissemination of religious approaches, action, and practice. At the same time, the leadership of the Islamic centers is keen to stress that the context, relations with the Neapolitan society, especially in its social and political manifestations, the pluralism of the Muslim communities there, as well as their material conditions, are the elements on which local action is constructed in an autonomous way. The Islamic centers in Napoli are at the intersection of subjects and scales. In conclusion, there is a tension between different scales and subjects that is not necessarily conflictual. The tension could be, as in this case-study, the continuous adjustment and negotiation through which Muslim spatiality in Napoli is produced and adapted to a specific context, society, that is a specific mode of production.

Bibliography / References

Sources

- COMUNE DI NAPOLI. Delibera n. 1972. Registro delle deliberazioni di Giunta Comunale. Napoli 2006.
- . Delibera n. 59. Registro delle deliberazioni di Giunta Comunale. Napoli 2009.
- . Delibera n. 1779. Registro delle deliberazioni di Giunta Comunale. Napoli 2010.
- COMUNE DI NAPOLI, SERVIZIO CIMITERI CITTADINI. *Relazione illustrativa*. Napoli 2015.
- COMUNE DI NAPOLI, SERVIZIO STATISTICA. *La struttura demografica della popolazione residente nella città di Napoli al 31 dicembre 2016*. Napoli 2017.
- ISTITUTO NAZIONALE DI STATISTICA (ISTAT). 2023. *Il censimento permanente della popolazione in Campania*. <https://www.istat.it/it/files//2023/09/Campania_Focus-2021_Censimento-permanente.pdf> (last accessed Oct. 14, 2023).
- MINISTERO DEL LAVORO E DELLE POLITICHE SOCIALI. *La presenza dei migranti nella città metropolitana di Napoli*. Roma 2019.
- . *La presenza dei migranti nella città metropolitana di Napoli*. Roma 2020.
- . *La presenza dei migranti nella città metropolitana di Napoli*. Roma 2021.
- . *La presenza dei migranti nella città metropolitana di Napoli*. Roma 2022.
- ORGANIZZAZIONE INTERNAZIONALE PER LE MIGRAZIONI (OIM) & PREFETTURA DI NAPOLI. *Rapporto sui cittadini stranieri residenti nella IV municipalità del Comune di Napoli*. Napoli 2019.

Studies

- ABBAMONTE, Francesco, Antonia ARENA, and Roberta PACELLI. 2022a. "I migranti commercianti a Napoli: un quadro al 31 dicembre 2020". *Territorio*, 100: 107-118.
- . 2022b. "Le relazioni tra infrastruttura urbana e agenzialità imprenditoriale dei migranti a Napoli". *Territorio*, 100: 119-125.
- ALLIEVI, Stefano (eds.). 2010. *Mosques in Europe. Why a solution has become a problem*. London: Alliance Publishing Trust.
- ALLIEVI, Stefano, and Jorgen S. NIELSEN (eds.). 2003. *Muslim Networks and Transnational Communities in and across Europe*. Leiden [etc.]: Brill.
- ALLIEVI, Stefano, Renzo GUOLO, and Khalid RHAZZALI (eds.). 2017. *I musulmani nelle società europee. Appartenenze, interazioni, conflitti*. Milano: Guerini & Associati.
- AMATO, Fabio. 1992. "Africani a piazza Garibaldi". *La città nuova*, VII.1-2: 91-94.
- . 1997. "La città come immagine: il suq di piazza Garibaldi a Napoli e l'integrazione povera". *Africa e Mediterraneo*, 1: 20-23.
- . 2000. "La circolarità commerciale degli immigrati nel napoletano". *Afriche e Orienti*, 3.4: 53-57.
- . 2007. "Dall'area metropolitana di Napoli alla Campania plurale". In VIGANONI (eds.) 2007: 175-219.
- . 2017. "Imprenditorialità, mercati e commercio dei migranti in Italia: L'esperienza dell'area napoletana". *Semestrale di Studi e Ricerche di Geografia*, XXIX.2: 13-28.
- . 2018. "L'area della stazione centrale di Napoli: fragile cantiere dell'interculturalità". *Memorie Geografiche*, 16: 301-306.
- (ed.). 2014. *Etica, immigrazione e città: uno sguardo sulla Napoli che cambia*. Napoli: Photocity.
- , and Pasquale COPPOLA (eds.). 2009. *Da migranti ad abitanti. Gli spazi insediativi degli stranieri nell'area metropolitana di Napoli*. Napoli: Guida.
- , and Rosario SOMMELLA. 2014. "Peripheries and Practices of Consumption in the Naples Metropolitan Area". *Cidades*, 11.18: 114-128.
- ALBRECHT, Sarah. 2018. *Dār al-Islām Revisited*. Leiden [etc.]: Brill.
- AVALLONE, Gennaro. 2017. *Sfruttamento e resistenze: Migrazioni e agricoltura in Europa, Italia, Piana del Sele*. Verona: Ombre Corte.
- BRIGNONE, Michele. 2019. "L'islam in Italia, tra partecipazione civica e reti transnazionali". *Quaderni di diritto e politica ecclesiastica*, 1: 7-20.
- CARITAS-MIGRANTES. 2022. *XXXI Rapporto Immigrazione 2022: Costruire il futuro con i migranti*. Todi: Caritas-Migrantes.
- CAEIRO, Alexandre. 2010. "The Power of European Fatwas: the Minority Fiqh Project and the Making of an Islamic Counterpublic". *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 42.3: 435-449.
- CESARI, Jocelyne. 2008. "Islam in the West: From Immigration to Global Islam". *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review*, 8: 148-175.
- CHIODELLI, Francesco. 2015. "Religion and the city: A review on Muslim spatiality in Italian cities". *Cities*, 44: 19-28.
- CIOCCA, Fabrizio. 2018. *Musulmani in Italia. Impatti urbani e sociali delle comunità islamiche a Roma*. Milano: Meltemi.
- . 2023. "Musulmani in Italia: una presenza stabile e sempre più italiana". <<https://www.lenius.it/musulmani-in-italia/>> (last accessed Oct. 14, 2023).

- CONRAD, Sebastian. 2016. *What is Global History?*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- DE ANGELO, Carlo. 2011. “L’adattamento del diritto islamico alle realtà occidentali. La nascita e i primi sviluppi del diritto delle minoranze musulmane”. *Studi Magrebini*, IX: 65-111.
- . 2013. “The Image of Europe and the Role of its Muslims, as Portrayed in the Contemporary Islamic Debate on Muslim Minorities”. *Journal of Muslims in Europe*, 2: 186-207.
- DE ANGELO, Carlo, and Serena TOLINO (eds.) 2017. “Islamic Law and Minorities”. *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies*, 17: 137-309.
- DEL GIUDICE, Luisa (ed.). 2009. *Oral History, Oral Culture, and Italian Americans*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- DI MAURO, Nicola. 2021. *I marocchini e l’Islam in Italia. Un campo da contendere*. Roma: Istituto Per l’Oriente Carlo Alfonso Nallino.
- . 2022. “Co-optation, Social Navigation and Double Presence of Muslim Moroccans in Italy: The Case of Italian Islamic Confederation”. In PEZZANO (et al., eds.) 2022: 41-61.
- . 2023. “Comunità e città mutevoli. L’islam e i musulmani a Napoli in epoca contemporanea. Un’indagine preliminare”. *Occhiali*, 12: 36-55.
- DINES, Nicholas. 2002. “Urban renewal, immigration, and contested claims to public space: The case of Piazza Garibaldi in Naples”. *Geojournal*, 58.2-3: 177-188.
- DI NUZZO, Annalisa. 2017. “Napoli e l’Islam: le conversioni in Campania dalla moschea di Piazza Mercato alla ridefinizione dell’identità partenopea in termini di creolizzazioni europee”. In MARCHESINI & NOVOA (eds.) 2017: 191-214.
- . 2020. *Conversioni all’Islam all’ombra del Vesuvio*. Roma: CISU.
- ELIADE, Mircea. 1984. *Il sacro e il profano*. Torino: Bollati Boringhieri.
- FERRARI, Alessandro (eds.). 2008. *Islam in Europa/Islam in Italia tra diritto e società*. Bologna: il Mulino.
- FOUCAULT, Michel. 1978 (2019). *La volontà di sapere. Storia della sessualità I*. Milano: Feltrinelli.
- GALLETTI, Rossella. 2015. “Nuove identità mediterranee e strategie di resistenza culturale: il fenomeno dei napoletani convertiti all’Islam”. *Annali*, 2013-2015: 177-202.
- GREEN, Nile. 2020. *Global Islam: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- KAUFMANN, Jean-Claude. 2009. *L’intervista*. Bologna: il Mulino.
- KNOTT, Kim. 2010. “Religion, Space, and Place. The Spatial Turn in Research on Religion”. *Religion and Society*, 1: 29-43.
- KONG, Lily. 2010. “Global Shifts, Theoretical Shifts: Changing Geographies of Religion”. *Progress in Human Geography*, 34.6: 755-776.
- LAINO, Giovanni. 2022a. “Gli immigrati ci mostrano come cambia la città”. *Territorio*, 100: 126-129.
- . 2022b. “Immigrazione straniera e attività commerciali a Napoli”. *Territorio*, 100: 104-106.
- LEFEBVRE, Henri. 1991. *The Production of Space*. Oxford [etc.]: Blackwell.
- MARCHESINI, Simona, and James Nelson NOVOA (eds.). 2017. *Simple Twists of Faith. Cambiare culto, cambiare fede: persone e luoghi / Changing Beliefs, Changing Faiths: People and Places*. Verona: Alteritas.
- MORPURGO, Daniela. 2021. “The Limits of Planning: Avoidance, Concealment, and Refusal of Religious Diversity in Northeast Italy”. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 22.1: 72-89.
- PAGANO, Ernesto. 2015. *Napolislam*. 75 min.

- . 2016. *Napolislam*. Milano: Centauria.
- PELLITTERI, Antonino. 2008. *Introduzione allo studio della storia contemporanea del Mondo arabo*. Roma-Bari: Editori Laterza.
- PEZZANO, Antonio, Daniela PIOPPI, Varona SATHIYAH, and Pier Paolo FRASSINELLI (eds.). 2021. *The Question of Agency in African Studies*. Napoli: Unior Press.
- PORTELLI, Alessandro. 2009. "What Makes Oral History Different". In DEL GIUDICE (ed.) 2009: 21-30.
- RICUCCI, Roberta. 2017. *Diversi dall'Islam. Figli dell'immigrazione e alter fedi*. Bologna: il Mulino.
- SALIH, Ruba. 2003. *Gender in transnationalism. Home, Longing and Belonging among Moroccan Migrant Women*. New York: Routledge.
- SEMI, Giovanni, and Magda BOLZONI. 2022. *L'osservazione partecipante. Una guida pratica*. Bologna: il Mulino.
- VIGANONI, Lida (ed.). 2007. *Il Mezzogiorno delle città: Tra Europa e Mediterraneo*. Milano: Franco Angeli.
- WALLERSTEIN, Immanuel. 2012. *Capitalismo storico e civiltà capitalistica*. Trieste: Asterios.
- WERNER, Michael, and Bénédicte ZIMMERMANN. 2006. "Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity". *History and Theory*, 45.1: 30-50.