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The diversity of retail trade in contemporary cities: a geographical perspective

From informal street vending to *halal* landscapes

By

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the contents and organization of this dissertation constitute my own original work and does not compromise in any way the rights of third parties, including those relating to the security of personal data.

Francesco Nurra

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I would like to dedicate this thesis to Sarah Hegazi, Alika Ogorchukwu, and Shireen Abu Akleh

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Abstract

This doctoral thesis examines retail geography in urban spaces through the lens of three distinct but interconnected chapters. The first chapter focuses on the informal street vending of goods, analysing it as both a form of labour and economic activity and a negotiated and contested space in urban environments. The second chapter examines the halal meat supply chain, exploring how it functions as a diverse economy or alternative food network in non-Muslim countries and as a source of conflictual and contested spaces, specifically in relation to ritual slaughterhouses and *halal* butcher shops. The third chapter narrows the scope to the specific case of Turin, analysing the relationship between Muslim spaces and secularisation. By examining how mosques and halal butcher shops were originally closely related but have evolved, the chapter explores how these spaces are perceived and experienced differently by different individuals and groups. Throughout the thesis, a common theme is a relationship between retail, urban spaces, and religion. The thesis emphasises that while retail can be a valuable resource or coping strategy, it can also be a source of conflict and negotiation. Additionally, the thesis highlights the complex relationship between food and retail in urban spaces, showing how it can be both a source of livelihood and conflict.

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Introduction

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Conceptual framework

Retail trade is a constantly evolving and complex phenomenon within cities (Simmons et al., 2018). Historically, it has been associated with the urban context since the foundation of cities, and nowadays, it is still part of the heritage of cities and part of urban morphological, economic and social changes (Stobart & Howard, 2020). Retail geography has been studied in human geography as consisting of the spatial organisation and location of retail and its relation with the behaviour of consumers. Two approaches can be traced inside retail geography: on the one hand, a mainstream approach based on neoclassical economic theory, on the other hand, a heterodox approach based on neo-Marxist and critical geography standpoints (Gregory et al., 2009, pp. 653–654). This critical human geography approach was named "new retail geography" in the '90s (Wrigley & Lowe, 2002). This thesis' starting point is based on the second approach.

The relation of retail geography with urban space still needs comprehensive and new studies (Carpio-Pinedo & Gutiérrez, 2020) updated to recent times and shifts in the urban context. Indeed, its physical (Araldi, 2019; Sung, 2022; Timmermans, 2004), economic (Daunfeldt, Mihaescu, & Rudholm, 2021; Kang, 2019; Ruiz-Rivera et al., 2016), and attractive (Daunfeldt, Mihaescu, Öner, et al., 2021; Öner, 2017) dimensions are overlooked features of retail trade in the urban space. Nevertheless, there is growing attention in urban studies towards retail regarding its presence in the urban context and its relation with new urban processes. For instance, studies on retail gentrification (Guimarães, 2018, 2022; Hubbard, 2017; Zukin et al., 2009) or on the relationship between retail gentrification and global capital processes (Cao, 2022; González, 2020) - namely concentration, internationalisation, and financialisation - (Mermet, 2016) are quite recent.

In the last few years, structural changes in the sector were caused by globalisation, crises, and a growing presence of the internet (Coe & Wrigley, 2018), such as platform capitalism

(Richardson, 2020) and e-commerce services (Etcheverry, 2023; Uraz, 2022), and great geoeconomic projects such as the Belt and Road initiative (Oliveira et al., 2020; The World Bank, 2018) or the semiconductors economic war (Miller, 2023). These changes caused many different outcomes for the sector, even in relation to the urban context. Outcomes are morphological (how the urban context is physically modified by new needs in retail trade), economic, and political. Namely, there is a strong relationship between global and local processes, and retail trade is heavily influenced by and influences urban spaces in economic, political, and social terms.

Inside this bigger picture, there is no monolithic and teleological way of modifying and interacting with the urban spaces by retail trade actors and vice versa, whilst different historical processes and forces intervened in different modalities within the evolution of each city. Thus, even though global capitalism's processes tend to create a top-down scenario of flat spaces without conflicts, there are still different ways and possibilities for conflicts around different ideas for the cities. This thesis's critical theoretical starting point is precisely between conflict or the absence of it around retail trade activities in the urban context.

Nevertheless, is this dichotomy the only way to analyse retail trade in cities nowadays, or is a further complexity involved in this scenario?

In this specific case, complexity means to realise that there are no fixed borders or the same outcome everywhere but that retail trade corresponds more to a geographically fragmented reality interconnected with other actors and processes within the urban spaces instead of a linear economic process that can create conflicts or resistance by various forces. The conflictual and relational standpoints, however, can coexist and live under the same roof, but one cannot exist without the other. Informal street vending is also the topic of the first chapter of this thesis. While the relational standpoint is a theoretical perspective that is also adopted in this doctoral thesis.

Diversity in general and from the diverse economy perspective is another overall perspective in this thesis.

Diverse economies are usually shown and explained with an iceberg which shows a surface part with the classic teleological conceptualisation of capitalism based on wage labour, commodity markets, and capitalist enterprise. On the other hand, the part under the surface shows a different and heterogeneous scenario based on various capitalist, non-capitalist or semi-capitalist approaches and performances outside the classic ones mentioned above (Gibson-Graham, 2020). Informal street vending, while endemic to capitalism, constitutes a part of this kaleidoscopical iceberg. Furthermore, the main feature of informal street vending is usually performance. Thus, due to being an activity based on performance and being diverse in terms of constituting a means of survival for many small entrepreneurs, informal street vending can be considered a diverse economic activity. Concerning the halal supply chain and its spaces, thanks to its moral, religious, and community nature, and its certification system similar to fair-trade ethical certifications, they can be fully considered part of a diverse economic sector. Namely, it is a diverse ecosystemic sector within urban contexts. Concerning the relations of informal street vending and the halal sector with the urban spaces, they are inserted and interact with processes and concepts listed in this chapter's following section.

Two-thirds of this thesis is dedicated to the ordinary livelihood of Muslims in cities. Part of this livelihood is constituted by the *halal* way of living and the economy related to it. The *halal* meat sector is the topic of the second chapter of this thesis. An urban sociology professor told me that “there is no such thing as the Muslim space”. The *halal* meat sector, however, needs specific religious-economic spaces and procedures in order to function. Furthermore, they are often in relation to the presence of Muslim worship spaces. The presence of Muslim spaces in Turin, including the worship and *halal* meat-related ones, is the

topic of the third chapter of this thesis. Once again, in this specific study, there is a conflictual interpretation of what is sacred and what is not, namely, what is secularised and what is not.
Each chapter presents ambivalent standpoints around the urban space: the first concerns the ambivalence of formality/informality and the ambivalence of the informal street vending activity during and after crises. Namely, being a vulnerable economic activity while also being a potential victim of eviction or potential creator of conflicts within the urban space. Chapter two concerns the halal meat sector's ambivalence, namely being a diverse economic sector and an alternative food network. Chapter three concerns the ambivalence of sacred spaces between secularism and sacredness.
This thesis attempts to overcome these dichotomies and ambivalent interpretations of urban spaces of retail that sometimes can cause conflicts.

Transversal standpoints

In this section of the introduction, there is an attempt to acknowledge theoretical standpoints which inspired and are sometimes transversal or invisible in this thesis.
The ethnic enclave, as theorised by Portes and Wilson (K. L. Wilson & Portes, 1980), turns out to be a teleological interpretation of ethnic minorities within urban contexts with a series of common characteristics:

> first, the presence of a substantial number of immigrants, with business experience acquired in the sending country; second, the availability of sources of capital; and third, the availability of sources of labour. The latter two conditions are not too difficult to meet. (Alejandro Portes & Manning, 2012)

Portes (2019) states that so-called ethnic enclaves are heterogeneous but have the common characteristic of being an aid to the survival of migrant communities and can constitute aid to and from the country of origin if they are based on solid entrepreneurship.

However, while Portes' approach is a significant contribution, it does not consider the spatial factor, a fundamental aspect, although susceptible to different urban characteristics. According to Marcuse (2005), at the spatial level, one must distinguish between various forms of concentration, which belong to different semantic spheres and have different results from each other: clustering is a neutral term that indicates the presence of a spatial concentration. Peach (2005) claims that there is no single model and univocal-teleological evolution of clustering but that there are different models whose evolution is not always the same and whose characteristics can vary from city to city.

Furthermore, considering ethnic or migrant entrepreneurship, an analysis of clustering outside the specific field of urban ethnic enclave studies is rare. There is a substantial lack of studies on spatial concentration with religious-cultural-ethnic characteristics that consider theories adhering to mainstream economic geography.

From an economic-spatial point of view, clustering is a topic that has been much studied in recent years by the so-called mainstream economic geography. The heterogeneity of these studies and the difficulty in finding a clear conceptualisation of clustering (Martin & Sunley, 2003) has led to several criticisms, such as the lack of consideration towards the complexity of the economic landscape (Martin & Sunley, 2007).

One of the main problems of many studies concerning clustering from an urban economic perspective is their teleological trend. Everything tends towards expansion and growth. Moreover, in these studies, the question of why proximity is a key element of this theoretical school or why analysing such proximity is usually not asked (Wolfe & Gertler, 2016). Another element that would be good to consider are public policies related to the economic

promotion of clustering, which have been subject to much criticism about their effects and effectiveness in some studies (Brakman & van Marrewijk, 2013; Shin & Hwang, 2021).

Studies on clustering from an economic perspective originated in the United States from Porter's studies in the 1980s. Another type of study is the one on industrial districts, inspired by Marshall, which initiated a European school of thought on clustering. Subsequently, since the 2000s, the American school of thought inspired by Porter and the European school of thought have been substantially integrated. The constant difficulty in defining clustering has given rise to different methodological and disciplinary views on the subject (Smorodinskaya & Katukov, 2019). Indeed, the narrative of evolutionary economic geography is a successful one, which considers a Darwinian development of the urban, but which, for example, does not consider inequality relations with other urban areas. In other words, this type of analysis usually does not take into account the existence of income inequalities, the political consequences of the advantage of these areas over others, and an urban context in which subjects often forgotten by economic geography such as monopolies and the logic of finance are the winners (Feldman et al., 2021).

As we have seen in the previous section, not all urban areas that concern clustering are "success stories" whose causes should be sought (Cottineau et al., 2018; Delgado, 2018; Puga, 2010) or areas with high economic density (Zhang et al., 2018) or high income (Garcia-López & Moreno-Monroy, 2018; McAvay & Verdugo, 2021; Modai-Snir, 2021). Concomitant factors at the economic-spatial level, such as enclave size or ethnic capital (Andersson et al., 2020) or not necessarily economic (Shdema & Martin, 2020) should therefore be taken into account. For example, the narrative of urban agglomeration as a success story does not consider those "interconnections between wealth creation and poverty generation" (Peck, 2017, p. 7271f), summarising the logic of uneven development.

One of the distinct lines of research that give much space to spatial concentration or clustering while also considering cultural characteristics is that on ethnic economic enclaves. Usually,

this line of research does not take into account the broader and more general literature, just as the more mainstream literature does not take into account the literature on ethnic enclaves. Such an inclusion would give a more complete and critical overview. However, in both literatures a determinist and almost essentialist-stereotypical view remains.

The most widespread group of studies on ethnic economic enclaves analyses them as isolated places of survival and mutual aid, thus of great benefit to foreign communities. However, other studies have demonstrated the non-determinism and heterogeneity of ethnic economic enclaves. The latter have shown that they can sometimes bring income and labour disadvantages for immigrant communities. Furthermore, there can also be a so-called spatial spread of economic activities related to a certain ethnic group instead of a spatial concentration (Pullés & Lee, 2019). Wang's (2018) proposal is to consider evolution from urban changes as well and thus to conduct studies that do not take into account an essentialist approach.

Clustering is not the same phenomenon as agglomeration, or at least clustering can characterise agglomeration, but on specific conditions. Thus, clustering can happen, but it could not constitute agglomeration.

Malmberg (2009) attempted to describe agglomeration from economic geographers' perspective: the concentration process in a determined space supposedly carried out with rationality and created positive economic outputs. Nevertheless, a precise definition of agglomeration economies from a spatial perspective has not been elaborated (Cottineau et al., 2018).

Another attempt to elaborate the reasons that lead to agglomeration is provided by Scott (2021): agglomeration can happen when there is a high level of division of labour within the so-called urban land nexus; furthermore, historically, "Other kinds of social relationships, too,

can play a role in encouraging agglomeration, and specialised settlements may accordingly form based on religious, political and military priorities, though they are likely to be small given that opportunities to reap positive returns of scale and scope will in all probability be limited" (Scott, 2021, p. 4).

Furthermore, both Florida and Moretti (2019; 2013) share the same standpoint on what leads to agglomeration: people determine clustering and agglomeration. Besides, they also share support for deregulation in terms of planning regulation; according to them, the more the forces of clustering (in this case, all the people related to a specific class or determined jobs) can gentrify, build and change the urban context the more that specific context could be wealthy and attract new people and investments, and the more housing would become affordable. Wild growth without any limitation is their keyword, in the name of clustering as the driving force of success. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that the deregulation of planning regulations and raising housing construction can lead to more affordable housing and a reduction of income inequalities. On the contrary, deregulation would increase gentrification (Rodríguez-Pose & Storper, 2019).

According to Storper and Scott (Storper, 2013; Storper & Scott, 2009), the situation is more complex than the one described by Florida and Moretti. In other words, it is not a specific class of people that determines agglomeration, but it is a specific place chosen by firms that create the possibility for new jobs and clustering. Furthermore, another issue that must be considered is the phenomenon of agglomeration and de-agglomeration while time passes. While Moretti and Florida (with a recent partial but not substantial rethinking in terms of inequality) focus on the creative or high-tech class, Scott criticises this standpoint by adding that the low-skilled or unskilled workers are necessary infrastructural forces for the cities in order to survive (Scott, 2017, pp. 121–123).

A common terrain for these authors is the Schumpeterian conception (clearly or unclearly stated) of creative destruction symbolised by innovation. Innovation is the symptom of

growth, and it is usually associated with the presence of clusters and agglomeration. Hence, the more a place shows the presence of clustering, the more innovation and agglomeration are there. This point of view tends to consider only innovation as an instrument that proves a higher growth and wealth of a specific place.

Unfortunately, it seems that this standpoint does not consider the dark side of this growth, or it takes into account it - namely inequality - but without using the same analysis instrument used for analysing growth and wealth. What if an ethnic enclave economy can be agglomerative, clustered, and innovative?

Considering a mere speculative and qualitative standpoint, thus not based on quantitative data, two theoretical and procedural elements are considered together with clustering, agglomeration and innovation: proximity and relatedness.

A clear definition of proximity has not been elaborated yet, but it is a concept that has social and political implications (André Torre & Talbot, 2018).

Rallet and Torre (2010), while acknowledging the ambiguous nature of proximity, have individuated two different typologies of proximity: geographical, which is based on physical distance, and organisational, which is relational. Boschma (2010) claimed that proximity is not only a geographical element but can be subdivided into different typologies, not only the geographical one, but also institutional, social, organisational, and knowledge proximity.

Proximity does not always constitute a symmetrical relationship, especially cultural proximity (Marrocu et al., 2014; Wagner & Peters, 2014). Furthermore, if we relate it to innovation, a high degree of proximity is not always a cause of innovation (R. Boschma & Frenken, 2009; Rallet & Torre, 1998).

According to Hidalgo (2018), the principle of relatedness concerns “the probability that a region enters (or exits) an economic activity as a function of the number of related activities present in that location” (C. A. Hidalgo et al., 2018, p. 452). Unfortunately, the same authors

claim that the principle of relatedness also raises spatial inequality and lowers the possibilities for peripheral cities to develop.

Relatedness exists when "two activities are not identical but share commonalities. Such commonalities may originate from two activities belonging to the same overarching technological or share complementarities and similarities" (Juhász et al., 2021, p. 1). Relatedness is not usually investigated regarding its evolution over time, and analysing it from this perspective would improve its conceptualisation. Furthermore, relatedness is positively influenced by co-location (geographical proximity) and vice versa. For instance, a global sense of place (Massey, 1991), namely its identity, results from the sometimes conflictual relation of a space with other spaces. Besides, the relational perspective regarding space is an important theoretical standpoint in human geography (Glückler & Panitz, 2021; Jones, 2009; Malpas, 2012), especially in urban (McCann & Ward, 2010a; Sigler, 2013; Ward, 2010; Wong et al., 2022) and economic geography (Bathelt & Glückler, 2003; Elwood et al., 2017; Yeung, 2005).

Aims, scope and research questions

Retail geography is a subfield of geography that usually concerns the localisation of retail activities in urban spaces and business plans based on spatial analyses. It rarely considers the interaction of retail trade activities with urban space processes and actors. The first research question of this thesis regards the hypothesis of making retail trade more entrenched with urban political and economic processes and the presence of specific actors.

RQ1: Does retail trade, in the specific case of informal street vending and *halal* meat retail, contribute to the conflictual shifts of urban spaces, and how is it related to urban economic and political processes?

This research question is the starting point of all the chapters of this thesis. The answers to this research question are different in each chapter. The presence of retail trade activities in the three chapters intersects with the identities of the persons who perform them. In the first chapter, retail trade intersects with the poor urban population (migrants are often part of this poor urban population), and in the second and third chapters, it intersects with the Muslim population, which partly consists of migrants in countries with non-Muslim majorities.

RQ2: Do the ones who perform retail trade activities change the urban space according to their identities?

This question considers the presence of the intersectionality feature of the investigated subjects. Namely, so-called marginal actors in urban spaces, such as informal street vendors, Muslim adherents, and *halal* meat vendors, become actors who can modify the urban spaces or give their contribution to a heterogenous multiplicity of urban forces which are part of an urban economic ecosystem. In the first chapter, informal street vendors fragment public space in times of crisis and beyond, and their presence often constitutes a conflict or negotiation terrain. In the second chapter, the *halal* production and retail sector is a potential creator of conflict and an alternative food network with specific spaces and practices within the city. In the second and third chapter, Muslim spaces, including the retail ones, are part of a religious sensitivity that modifies urban spaces and create a *halal* landscape.

RQ3: Does religious sensitivity, in this case, Muslim sensitivity, contribute to a different organisation and conceptualisation of urban spaces?

Religious-related spaces are part of the orthopraxis of Islam in urban spaces. The *halal* landscape, including worship and non-worship spaces, answers this question in the second chapter. Nevertheless, in the third chapter, the case of Muslim spaces in Turin exemplifies the complexity of religious landscapes in cities. In both cases, it seems that the logic followed by these spaces, especially the retail ones, is mostly a *sufi* one, namely, in these cases, seeing the invisible in the visible. For instance, the interpretation of the identity of a space like a *halal* butcher's shop is relative: a non-Muslim sees it as an ordinary butcher's shop, but a Muslim can perceive it as part of the orthopraxis in urban spaces.

Regarding the original contribution of this thesis to current debates in urban studies with an emphasis on economic and political geography, this thesis adds a few points to studies on informality, retail, conflict, food, and religious spaces. First, it contributes to adding a little further option to studies on informal street vending based on structuralism, namely starting from considering informal street vending as an activity related to the presence of structural and cyclical crises, it individuates the potentiality of resistance and conflict represented by the presence of informal street vending in urban spaces. Second, it adds another perspective on retail trade as the final part of a production chain that involves food related to religious needs. In other words, *halal* meat and its production and retail are potentially related to conflict caused by its presence in urban spaces. Third, this thesis adds a contribution to studies on religious spaces by suggesting to include non-officially religious spaces (in this specific case, spaces related to the *halal* economic sector) in studies on Muslim spaces in the cities.

Structure: overview of the papers

The thesis is subdivided into chapters investigating different issues in retail trade in urban spaces. Subsequent to this introduction, three chapters are presented. The abstracts of the chapters are given below.

Chapter 1. Informal street vending: from an economic activity during crises to a contested activity in urban spaces

Informal street vending, despite the significative global diminishing of informal economy and employment in the last 30 years, is still a globally important economic activity, especially during and after crises. Namely, informal street vending often provides a safety net for the urban poor population during and after crises. This chapter presents a comprehensive literature review regarding informal street vending in urban spaces. The articles analysed in this literature review are mostly not prior to 2008 and are subdivided into three dimensions: labour, economic performance, and conflict/negotiation. On the one hand, informal street vending is a vulnerable economic activity that can become the victim of harassment and eviction operated by multiple actors. On the other hand, informal street vending is a potentially resistant or conflictual activity within cities. In conclusion, informal street vending operates a fragmentation of urban spaces that can be potentially resistant to urban processes and shifts. The latest is a feature to be considered by policymakers and scholars who study this phenomenon.

Chapter 2. The *halal* meat sector: a diverse economic sector as a potential producer of conflicts

This chapter aims to present a review of the literature about the halal meat sector within the urban and regional economy. A qualitative evaluation and classification of studies about the halal sector is the literature's principal methodology. The *halal* sector's peculiar existence is a diverse economic sector that, in countries with a non-Muslim majority, can assume features of alternative food networks. This diversity sometimes produces spaces that can become conflictual spaces within the urban context. The main limitation of this review is that the articles analysed are mostly articles not prior to 2007, written in English, Spanish, Italian and French. This article mainly contributes to the debate about diverse economies in the urban context by evaluating the literature about a mostly unexplored topic. Another original aspect of this article is the attempt to show the sometimes-conflictual spatial outcomes that this diverse economy produces.

Chapter 3. Muslim spaces in Turin: a relational perspective beyond secularisation and sacredness

This chapter investigates the Muslim spaces in Turin, including the non-worship ones, how they are related to each other, and the supposed secularisation of the non-worship one. To this end, while taking into account the ongoing debate about secularised and sacred spaces, and the relational perspective between spaces, this study investigates the presence of official sacred spaces such as mosques in relation to unofficial sacred spaces such as halal butchers and kebab shops within the urban context of Turin. These spaces and persons are investigated

through semi-structured interviews. Results suggested that the secularisation of religious spaces occurs within an institutional dynamic and can also occur within the community itself without external intervention. This fact occurs through changing relations between spaces and people over time. Another variable that comes into play is the relative interpretation of spaces according to the different sensitivities of their users, who may interpret certain practices and places as sacred or without a value of sacredness.

A reduced version of this chapter has been published in Italian as Nurra, F. (2023). Gli spazi musulmani a Torino: una prospettiva relazionale oltre la secolarizzazione e la sacralità. *Documenti Geografici*, 2, 427-452. http://dx.doi.org/10.19246/DOCUGEO2281-7549/202202_23

My positionality: from disability to the multitude

In addition to the ordinary difficulties of every person who decides to pursue a career in the academic world, a contextual factor was created by the inaccessibility of cities for people with disabilities. Nowadays, urban oppression for people with disabilities mostly consists of physical inaccessibility and socio-spatial exclusion (Gleeson, 2002). Being both a wheelchair user and a neurodivergent person makes me really aware of it. Nevertheless, as Goodley (2020) suggests: disability can make us think more creatively about humanity. In this specific case, disability made me think in a more creative way about research, cities, and other edible things. According to the social model of disability, the obstacles are not created by disability, but disability is artificially created, and so are the obstacles that a person with a disability must face as a person and researcher. Obstacles are nowadays both present in the academic

world and cities. During this research, me, my supervisor and co-supervisor were faced with the objective issues that a world projected for normate bodies and minds creates. This produced the hidden labour of disabilities, namely a labour that a person with a disability must make to overcome the obstacles produced by cities made for normate bodies. In other words, we had to find solutions. From this perspective, being creative was not funny. But it seems I have reached the objective of finishing a PhD.

The first obstacle for the research was getting out of my house to physically reach spaces. Nowadays, the internet and smartphones have made reaching out to people easier, but to reach Muslim communities in Turin, most of the time, it was necessary to physically meet interviewees and visit spaces. The difficulty in getting out is due to the lack of functioning welfare in the care sector. In other words, if I want to go out and reach unexplored spaces, someone has to come to my house to make me wear my jacket, open the door, use the lift, and open the building door. These operations require the presence of a person, but this person has to be paid. I did not have enough money to pay for additional care assistance to conduct my fieldwork. Thus, we required an assistant to conduct research at the university, but even this person was limited in the tasks she could perform: she could not come to my house to open the door and help me to reach spaces to conduct my fieldwork. Once getting out of my house, obstacles and barriers were not few. I do not know how navigating unexplored oceans could be, but I know that using a wheelchair in unexplored parts of a city could be tricky and dangerous, like exploring an ocean full of sharks. Furthermore, the spaces where I wanted to conduct the fieldwork were not always accessible to wheelchair users. The inaccessibility of the world and the time spent on finding solutions about conducting fieldwork made me surrender to one thing: another empirical research with interviews in an environment hostile to disabilities was not possible. Besides, these events took place during the pandemic times, so there were also additional limitations to mobility (for instance, going abroad would not have been possible). Lately, I have started trying to find a postdoctoral position in universities

around the world, and in case there is fieldwork to conduct, I ask if the fieldwork is accessible or could be made accessible with reasonable accommodations. At least, these limitations have taught me how to project and conduct research in an accessible world and hostile environment. Thinking about it in advance can help to prevent future situations in which outcomes of fieldwork would be jeopardised by a structurally ableist world.

Until the '70s, architecture, urban planning and design did not consider the existence of people with disabilities in cities. Cities were made for white, able-bodied men until the epistemic activism and pressure of the disability rights movement made the existence of non-normate bodies acknowledged. Clear examples of this pressure were the physical change applied to curbs to make them accessible in Berkeley in 1976 (Hamraie, 2017) or when a group of disabled people discovered that persons could be sent to the moon, but wheelchairs could not have access to public buses in Los Angeles in 1981 (Guffey, 2017). Lately, the struggle of people with disabilities can be inserted into the struggles of social movements and individuals who claim the right to the city and its accessibility. Unfortunately, this struggle seems to be frequently accompanied by a charity perspective instead of a full recognition of participation in urban life for people with disabilities (Bezmez, 2013; Yardimci & Bezmez, 2018). It seems that urban policies and practitioners, despite the growing attention given to disability in urban studies and the Sustainable Development Goals and New Urban Agenda, still do not consider the existence of non-normate bodies that could use private and public spaces in cities (Pineda et al., 2017). What causes this lack of mobility and exclusionary spaces has a name: ableism. Enabling can simply be defined as "Prejudice and discrimination toward individuals simply because they are classified as disabled – regardless of whether their impairments are physical or mental, visible or invisible" (Nario-Redmond, 2019, p. 6). Those who want to fight an ableist society, unfortunately find themselves dealing with a series of daily micro acts of violence perpetrated over time by a more or less invisible cultural enemy, a Leviathan whose rules must be accepted on pain of total marginalisation and psychological

annihilation of the individual. Microviolences are all those attitudes and behaviours that lead to psychological saturation and, in some cases, to the willingness to insulate oneself in order to prevent them from happening again. In other words, it means not bearing the weight of many small stab wounds inflicted daily by friends, relatives, parents, acquaintances and colleagues at work, people who do not perceive certain things as drama but who, as they accumulate, produce the effect of an exploding pressure cooker.

An example of how this Leviathan proves to be very real not only in private life but also in public life is the fact that Trump, in the election in which he won, received considerable support from the white American working class in rural areas, not only by teasing the racist imagination and promising economic well-being but by making extensive use of an enabling lexicon to contrast the supposed qualities of strength and perfection of the white male in rural areas with those of a "cripple" America, that is, "crippled" and physically and mentally weak (Harnish, 2017). If we were then to take a portrait of disability in the United States, we would see that disability means social and economic marginalisation (Harnish, 2017) (not only in the United States, unfortunately) and a very strong presence of inmates with disabilities in prisons (Russell, 2019). Nevertheless, ableism is mostly related to the antisocial behaviour and economic selfishness of capitalism. Capitalism is ableist, and ableism is capitalist, two recent examples of this relation are the election of Trump and the Brexit vote. A subliminal ableist message had a great role in the pro-Brexit campaign through idioms such as "being self-sufficient" or "standing alone" (Goodley & Lawthom, 2019). Lately, during the Covid-19 global emergency, ten States in the US decided to prioritise healthcare treatments for able-bodied and to left people with disabilities behind with sincerely ableist considerations (Jervis, 2020).

However, one must not lose hope. With the help of the transposition of critical race theory, people with disabilities can be considered as survivors and "by exposing the practices of ableism and unravelling the psychic life of internalized ableism, unearthing various states of

injury, when reiterating these violences and injuries I am mindful of the necessity not to re-perform them" (Campbell, 2008). Another mode involves a "Guerrilla activity – rejecting the promises of liberalism and looking elsewhere, daring to speak otherwise about impairment." using marginality not as an element of constant victimisation but as a space of resistance (Campbell, 2008, p. 13). I wanted to start with this resistance as a way of building research proposals and policy proposals. To explain better, "The politics of redistribution must be central to disability strategy – but there is no doubt that the struggle for recognition (which is the struggle against ableism) is important in keeping on the agenda disabled people's demands for respect and esteem" (Loja et al., 2013, p. 200). These two struggles must be part of a greater struggle against neoliberal values and modalities of oppression. Nevertheless, the people with disabilities social movement is a young movement, and it needs allies. Other movements, such as the feminist one, required centuries to reach their political objectives, and the people with disabilities movement did not have the same amount of time to emancipate and discuss options. Furthermore, there is not a strong theoretical and political debate about disability in the academic and activist context at the moment. Especially in academia, there is a growing interest towards disability studies as an academic discipline with its dignity, but it is debatable that a strong theoretical standpoint is recently born in human geography. The main obstacle is that disability is intrinsically heterogeneous and in potentiality: heterogeneous because disabilities have a wide range of forms (physical, intellectual, sensorial, invisible and so on), and in potentiality because everybody could potentially become a person with a disability during life, especially when older. Quantitative and qualitative exhaustive analyses cannot be easily produced because of the complex character of disabilities. General assumptions about disability are usually part of the neoliberal-ableist modality of action and organisation. Non-ableist policies and activism must take into account these differences among disabilities.

The dis/abled bodies can be analysed from a relational perspective, namely a perspective that considers the relations of these bodies with other bodies, objects and spaces (Hall & Wilton, 2016).

People with disabilities can potentially teach us the need and desire for connections and relations (Goodley, 2020). This is the starting point for the relational and proximal standpoint of this thesis.

Going back to the features of disability, while considering the differences, people with disabilities sometimes are not going to survive without other people. In my case, as for other millions of people in the world, this is mandatory in order to survive and to live with dignity. Personal care assistance makes me survive, and this is the reason why an intersectional approach in activism and research is necessary, in my opinion. With reference to care labour, it is globally performed by migrant women or by women within families. Most of the time, being a personal care assistant or working in the care sector corresponds to not having dignity and conditions equal to men at work or within the family. Tracing contacts between the feminist struggle regarding care labour and the independent living struggle of the people with disabilities movement could be a political proposal to make both proposals stronger. Nevertheless, these struggles are parts of a bigger struggle against capitalism. The concept of the multitude, as Hard and Negri elaborate it, is particularly useful to explain the wide range of subjectivities behind an equally large variety of typologies of struggles. But the practices of the multitude are not static, they are an ongoing process:

> The politics of the multitude has its feet planted firmly on the terrain of coalition politics but it never remains merely a collection of identities. Through processes of articulation it sets out on a journey of transformation. Sometimes these articulations stretch across time and space through the formation of a cycle of struggles. A cycle is not formed by a simple repetition of the same struggle among different subjectivities or in different parts of the world. In a new context the

> struggle is always different. A cycle is formed when the activists are able to operate a political translation by which they both adopt and transform the protest repertoires, modes of action, organizational forms, slogans, and aspirations developed elsewhere (Hardt & Negri, 2017, p. 293).

One of the main instruments (not the only one, according to my personal point of view) that the multitude uses to transform itself and the context in which it lives is the instrument of the assembly. This constitutive right is not a top-down concession or a simple defensive mechanism against oppression, but it is the basis "for taking power differently, through cooperation in social production" (Hardt & Negri, 2017, p. 295). Samir Amin, another renowned Marxist scholar, criticised the concept of multitude by calling it a "generalized proletarianization" and using a geographical distinction between the core and peripheries considered as dominant centres and exploited peripheries because they constitute an accumulation and exploitation paradigm:

> The processes of proletarianization (I use this term deliberately even if they immediately appear as processes of dispossession, exclusion, and pauperization) in the peripheries do not reproduce, with a delay, those that formed (and continue to form) the structures of the societies in the dominant centers. Underdevelopment is not a delay, but the concomitant product of development. The social structures produced in the peripheries are also not vestiges of the past. The submission of these societies distorted the earlier structures and shaped them in such a way as to make them useful to imperialist expansion of global capitalism (which is inherently polarizing). Workers in the informal sector, for example—continually growing in number and proportion in the peripheral South—are not vestiges of the past, but products of capitalist modernity. They are not excluded, but segments of labor completely integrated into the system of capitalist exploitation. Here let me make an analogy with the domestic labor of women: this informal labor—non- or

> poorly remunerated—makes it possible to reduce the price of labor power employed in the formal segments of production. (Amin, 2014)

Amin critique sounds more like a critique not regarding the substance of Hardt and Negri's work, but about the form of the multitude concept and against the elaboration made by Hardt and Negri in *Empire*, in which empire has overcome its subdivision in dominant and exploited contexts to become a pervasive net that has no centre. Nevertheless, Amin's critique is a necessary passage to clarify some aspects of my research and positionality. Firstly, I think both the positions I previously reported have the same dignity because I think that on the one hand, Amin tries to illustrate capitalist modernity in a more descriptive way which also takes into account the geographical divide between the global North and South. On the other hand, Amin's thought about informality - the topic of this thesis' first chapter - resembles Marxist orthodoxy, and it is sort of an authoritarian critique against those studies that consider the informal sector as the product of social and economic marginality and the only way to survive for some people. For instance, Veronica Gago (2017) describes the functioning of a part of the informal sector in Buenos Aires, discovering that informality is the long-term by-product of neoliberal policies and constitutes neoliberal rationality from below. Thus, she would probably agree with Amin's position, except for the fact that according to Gago's standpoint, subalterns have an active role in microphysical decision-making.

> Great enthusiasm and dedication to the point of risking one's life are not the only ways of serving a cause. The conscious revolutionary is not only a person of feeling, but also one of reason, to whom every effort to promote justice and solidarity rests on precise knowledge and on a comprehensive understanding of history, sociology and biology (Harvey, 2015).

David Harvey referred to this extract from a Reclus's letter (Reclus Elisée, 1901) in response to the critical standpoint of Simon Springer (2014), a self-proclaimed anarchist geographer.

The choice to refer to this is because of two reasons. On the one hand, being both an activist and a researcher means, from my perspective, being both a person of feeling and a person of reason. On the other hand, means that the debate surrounding Springer and Harvey querelle is not what I would like to follow in my research. Critical and radical geographies are naturally heterodox approaches towards the discipline of human geography. Thus, trying to ask myself where in the subdivision of the broad heterodox approaches of critical geographies my research and activism are, it is not what I am concerned about. I think that the best approach is the one suggested by Katherine Gibson in the same debate:

> Radical geography in its broadest sense is making major contributions to knowledge horizons today. The exciting range of radical geographic research remains somewhat unacknowledged in the way that geography always seems to shrink from popular acclaim in comparison to other disciplines with their Nobel Prize winners and public intellectuals. But our scholarship turns up in remarkable places and is drawn upon by a wide range of practitioners, both academic and activist. Rather than recenter radical geography on one political tradition, no matter how attached to freedom it might be, I am more attracted to appreciating the heterogeneity of perspectives and methods that flourish under its rubric. To my mind, the protean process by which insurrection creates new worlds exceeds any one name (Gibson, 2014, p. 286).

Barnes and Christophers in *Economic Geography: A Critical Introduction* trace the map of critical economic geography. According to these authors, economic geography could be represented as an archipelago in which mainstream (neoclassical) economic geography corresponds to a huge island isolated from the other ones, which correspond to heterodox and critical approaches towards economic geography. The sea separates these islands, but they are connected by bridges and by being not so far away from each other's (Barnes & Christophers, 2018). This archipelago could be extended to other branches within human geography and

critical and radical geographies. Considering this perspective, in my opinion, the question of positionality concerns not being in a prefixed position but navigating the sea surrounding this archipelago first as a continuously hungry explorer and then as a confident navigator. This metaphor is also useful to explain my personal point of view about what research is in relation to activism.

Having previously mentioned the concept of multitude and its behaviour was a way to introduce my personal point of view. I am the multitude: this synecdoche explains what I think about research and activism. I am sure part of the multitude, and I transform and move towards new practices and strategies while the time passes by, other activists and researchers globally adopt the same and other tactics.

Movement in space and time towards new horizons of knowledge and resistance as an integral part of doing research and activism concerns being conscious of who we currently are and of the fact that we must trace a path to reach our destination. While we must acknowledge to ourselves that this path will change us and the modality with which we investigate and analyse the context that surrounds us, we must take into account the fact that we are not able to trace the route with elevated precision and that our destination is still unclear, if we act without presumptuous preconceptions and prejudice. The latter observation means that (like the multitude) research requires a high level of acceptance regarding the changing and flowing nature of the object of our research. Investigating the object would imply the necessary observation that if we do not act with prejudice and an ideological attitude, we will discover new perspectives during and when we end our research. Expecting to enrich our knowledge about the object of our research does not correspond to leaving research design and a structured project behind but avoiding writing and investigating with a predetermined conclusion based on personal convictions. This is the route I tried to follow in my doctoral research, transforming myself and, possibly, the world around me without teleological prescriptions!

Another attempt was to transform the objective of research into a subject of research. Gian Antonio Gilli in *Come Si Fa Ricerca* describes the actors and agencies within research and their related issues. These issues are still within and outside the academic context. For instance, doctoral students, lecturers and professors are formally employees that work for a public or private institution. Thus this fact often constitutes an asymmetric power relation between the de facto contractee and the contractor (Gilli, 1971). This institutional power relation is usually ambivalent: on the one hand, the researcher is protected in the Ivory Tower of academia (Taylor, 2014), and on the other hand, it is mandatory to negotiate between personal values and the value system of academia. Academia is a hierarchical and neoliberal institution, hence how could we overcome the issues related to the necessity of research production and sometimes oppressive hierarchies within this institution? Having an approach related to and inspired by activism inside and outside academia could be one of the possible paths to follow within research and academic life.

Study limitations and future research

Considering the limitations of this study and the possible future research, it is necessary to acknowledge that the intention of this study is not to provide a comprehensive study on retail trade in urban spaces. Rather, the intention is to intersect retail trade with different perspectives and topics within the urban context, especially with diverse urban economic activities and so-called urban marginal groups such as informal street vendors and Muslim communities.

This thesis was originally designed as a study on informal street vending in urban spaces with two case studies that had to correspond to two chapters. Unfortunately, this was impossible since the pandemic did not allow mobility for research purposes or made it difficult. Thus, it was necessary to change the topic and start a new research from scratch in order to wait for the pandemic to end. The new research chosen was the study of Muslim communities, especially the spaces related to the *halal* meat sector.

Since the thesis comprises two literature reviews and an empirical article, the first limitation is the quantity of empirical data this study acknowledges. Once again, the limitations imposed by the restrictive rules related to the pandemic made the empirical study more difficult than expected initially. Other than that, despite the difficulty of getting in contact with *halal* butchers and kebab shops owners, the empirical qualitative data of the empirical study was enough to write a chapter based on it. In order to complete an overall analysis of Muslim spaces, including the ones related to dietary rules, a comprehensive analysis conducted with both quantitative and qualitative data will be necessary to understand the topic of Muslim spaces better. Furthermore, a comprehensive study of urban economies related to other dietary rules in other religions, such as Judaism and Hinduism, would be future research to expect.

As the first and especially the second article suggest, retail trade is only the final part of a bigger chain distributed in urban and regional areas. Thus, another perspective suggested by this study is to consider the path and spaces related to the production and retail of products to understand the whole picture of urban changes related to the retail and production of products. This point of view could be the starting point of critical urban studies that relate the complete chain to policies and political-economic processes in cities.

This thesis aims not to show a comprehensive study on retail trade in intersection with other urban topics but to trace a possible future line of research in urban studies with a specific focus on urban, political and economic geography.

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WHAT YOU ARE, TAKES YOU FAR

Chapter 1

Informal street vending: from an economic activity during crises to a contested activity in urban spaces

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Introduction

Informal street vending is a global urban phenomenon (Ha & Graaff, 2015). Nevertheless, most of the studies about informal street vending are related to its presence in so-called underdeveloped countries because it is a practice considered as mostly pertaining to Global South. Informal street vending in urban contexts is a practice performed thanks to the presence of migrant populations and native inhabitants who perform it. Its presence in urban contexts concerns an ambivalence, especially when related to crises: on the one hand, it is a survival strategy of the urban poor population, but on the other hand, it is a vulnerable economic activity that can easily become a victim of evictions, harassment, and organised crime. The presence of informal street vending causes a fragmentation of public spaces, and it is a potential force of resistance within the urban context. Furthermore, informal street vendors modify or adapt to urban spaces and processes and informal street vending can be modified by urban spaces and processes. This chapter aims to make a comprehensive literature review of studies about informal street vending. After a methodology section, a research domain introduces informal street vending from an overall perspective, and another section explains the three-dimensional subdivision of this literature. This chapter is then subdivided in other sections as follows: informal street vending as labour, informal street vending investigated as an economic performance, informal street vending as a contested-negotiated practice, discussion and conclusion section.

Methodology

This review is based on data collection and analyses conducted between February and March 2020, December 2022 and January 2023. The studies analysed are written mostly from 2008 to 2023. The research design consisted of three steps: an initial search for studies, a further selection of articles according to identified patterns, and a second search for articles later, following inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Initial research studies focused on the use of the Scopus database. The search used the terms “informal street vending”, “informal street vendors” and “informal street trade”. Scopus returned 229 results.

The following selection of articles was made in two ways. With the first selection method, an attempt was made to sort the articles found by patterns with similar recurring macro-themes. Three patterns were identified: informal street vending as work, informal street vending as economic performance, and informal street vending as negotiation or conflict in urban spaces. The subdivision is not absolute, namely, for instance, the analysis of street vending as economic performance may be part of an article about negotiating spaces. Therefore, for the inclusion of the studies within the different patterns, the article's main focus was considered. The criterion by type of street vending (for instance, sale of food or sale of clothes) was excluded from the subdivision, but a transversal criterion was preferred that would explain the street vending phenomenon without focusing on a specific type. More emphasis was then given - especially in the pattern concerning negotiation - to those articles with an urban focus, thus excluding, for example, studies concerning a rural context. The labour and economic patterns mostly collect articles that describe the phenomenon of informal street vending, whereas the pattern on the negotiation of spaces contextualises street vending and relates it to other actors and urban spaces.

With the second selection method, on the other hand, studies were chosen, again taking into account the subdivision described above, based on references. In this way, an almost diachronic study is carried out.

The second search for sources, which took place between December 2022 and February 2023, first of all, broadened the type of sources analysed to include books and reports concerning informal street vending and searched on google books and the search engine duckduckgo, respectively, with the inclusion and exclusion criteria used in the first search and its subsequent further subdivision. A chronological enlargement of the studies examined in the first and second searches was made by including what was published between 2020 and 2022 and using the inclusion and exclusion criteria used in the first search and its subsequent further breakdown. Subsequently, a geographical enlargement was carried out (considering the same criteria used in the other two enlargements), considering case studies beyond the so-called Global North and East. Thus, also those from the so-called Global North and Global East. This additional search happened because most studies on informal street vending specify a location and analysis in the Global South or developing countries as an important contextual part. Scopus analysis of the search results for "informal street vending" was useful in understanding which countries produce more studies on informal street vending: the United States is the top producer of articles on informal street vending (46 articles), and it is followed by South Africa (22 articles) and India (21 articles). The sum of all the articles ("informal street vending" on Scopus) from the so-called developed or global North countries equals 145, while the articles from the so-called underdeveloped or developing or global South countries are equal to 144. Perhaps it is obsolete to treat this topic geographically through the lens of the global North-South. However, it should be included as an endemic phenomenon of contemporary capitalism while considering the political, economic and social differences in each case, or not an essentialist activity related only to specific places and people, as Narayan (2019, 2020) suggests.

In conclusion, referring to the first research and the typological, chronological and geographical enlargements of the second research, this literature review used a total of 119 sources. Reports and books analysed are 21, and articles analysed are 98.

Introducing informality in relation with crises: a research domain proposal

Globally, the informal economy and employment have diminished since 1990 (Ohnsorge & Yu, 2021; Quiros-Romero et al., 2021). Statistics show that the informal sector constitutes between 20% and 34% of the GDP of the global economy in the period 2010-2017. Even though the informal sector is a global phenomenon, statistics show that some areas are affected by it more than others: Subsaharan Africa 34.4%, South America 34%, South Asia 28.1%, Middle East 21.9%, East Asia 21.3%, Europe 19.4% (Medina & Schneider, 2019). Despite the global diminishing of the informal economy and employment, employment in some areas is still high. Indeed "In Africa, 85.8 per cent of employment is informal. The proportion is 68.2 per cent in Asia and the Pacific, 68.6 per cent in the Arab States, 40 per cent in the Americas, and just over 25 per cent in Europe and Central Asia" (United Nations, 2018). Nevertheless, global growth of informal employment thanks to the pandemic and geopolitical and climate crises since 2021 is reported by ILO (2023).

Informal employment can be subdivided into different sub-sectors: home-based, domestic, waste picking, and street vending. Informal street vending is performed in public spaces (Vanek et al., 2015). This study focuses on informal street vending, choosing the economic, political and social dimensions of informality individuated by Boanada-Fuchs (2018). Thus, this study attempts to analyse informal street vending in a three-dimensional way.

Furthermore, the theoretical perspective chosen for this research is structuralism, as Williams (2012) theorised. This perspective seems more appropriate to analyse literature regarding this specific sector. As statistics show, most studies regarding informal street vending concern the poor population of countries highly affected by informal employment. Nevertheless, the activity of informal street vending is also present in countries seemingly less affected by informal employment, where it is mostly performed by migrants (Sassen, 1988; Skinner & Balbuena, 2019), and from an overall perspective by individuals from the poorest segments of the whole population. Hence, it is an activity performed even by indigenous persons looking for additional income sometimes due to capitalist crises (Boels, 2016).

On the one hand, informal street vending in urban contexts is often not considered within urban policies, usually aimed at the formal part of the urban economy. On the other hand, the informal urban economy provides a safety net during, in transition phases and after global economic crises (Cuvi, 2019; Humphrey & Skvirskaja, 2009), conflicts (Beall et al., 2013; Mackie et al., 2017; MacKie et al., 2022), or disasters (Brown, 2018; Lewis et al., 2019). It is also a coping strategy to survive labour avoidance or lack of employment for refugees and migrants (Betts et al., 2019; Brown et al., 2018).

For instance, after the collapse of the Soviet Union - where street trade was prohibited -in the Russian Federation and post-soviet states, there was (and is) a proliferation of informal street trade activities as a way to cope with the post-soviet crisis and shifts towards capitalist economies (Fehlings, 2022; Humphrey & Skvirskaja, 2009).

An example of a recent global crisis is provided by the covid-19 pandemic, which affected informal street vending, and especially the earning of street vendors (Semple & Kitroeff, 2020; Skinner & Watson, 2021; WIEGO, 2022), despite in some cases the same vendors adopted strategies to sustain their activity and elude health rules (Coletto et al., 2021; Nasution et al., 2021; Thai et al., 2021). Sometimes starting up street vending businesses was a strategy to avoid unemployment (Arredondo & Gonzalez, 2020). Nevertheless, for instance,

food street vending is a means of survival for vendors and customers with worse food insecurity. Hence, during the pandemic and in non-pandemic times, this specific sector of informal street vending must be considered one of the essential activities in the urban economy (Wegerif, 2020). Thus, informal street vending has an ambivalent relation with crises: on the one hand, it provides a safety net for vendors and customers in fragile urban economies and situations. On the other hand, it concerns vulnerability (OECD & ILO, 2019). Namely, it is a vulnerable economic sector and it can easily become a victim of harassment, restrictions (such as covid-19 crisis restrictions), criminalisation, and racket activities (Keck, 2012; Roever & Skinner, 2016).

A three-dimensional approach

According to McFarlane (2012), the distinction between formality and informality within the urban context is critical for analysing it. Its distinction happens in three different fields: urban territory (slum and non-slum), groups (labour), and governmentality (monitoring, naming and intervening). This divide is often investigated through four different lenses: as "a spatial categorisation" (McFarlane, 2012, p. 89), as "an organisational form" namely, it "is represented by unorganised, unregulated labour, although in practice such labour is often highly organised and disciplined", as "a governmental tool". Thus, the management and the subdivision between formality and informality operated by the state, as "a negotiable value". Furthermore, examining informality and formality as practices

> Requires a shift in how we register informal and formal spatialities: they no longer exist in specific territories within the city (whether offices of state and investment companies or markets and community resource centres), but instead are involved

> in the production of space. In other words, these practices do not just take place in particular places, but are productive of particular spaces (McFarlane, 2012, p. 105).

This review subdivides the analysed studies about informal street vending into three groups-patterns: informal labour, economy, and negotiation.

As pointed out in the research domain section, informal street vending can be considered an activity related to vulnerability and precarity - indeed - thanks to its informal character. In this specific case, the feature of vulnerability is a potential creator of resistance and conflict (Butler, 2016). Precarity and vulnerability depend on social and political infrastructures, institutions, and economic and social relationships (Butler, 2015). The activity of informal street vending creates labour, economic, and social relationships in a vulnerable and precarious urban context, especially around public spaces. This space is used by vendors, who can perform acts of resistance against precarity and eviction through their bodies.

Nevertheless, organised resistance or social movements are not an outcome to always expect from informal street vendors, but a possibility of evolution that is not teleological, as many studies on resistance by subaltern groups seem to convey (Bayat, 2013).

Since there is a growing interest in precarity in human geography, especially in labour geography (Strauss, 2018, 2020), the first dimension of informal street vending here analysed is the one of labour.

Furthermore, through their economic performance, informal street vendors contribute to creating value (Mezzadri, 2021) within the urban economy. Thus, the second dimension of informal street vending here analysed is economic performance.

Nevertheless, informal street vending is not only an activity related to precarity in labour and economic terms, but it is entrenched in social relationships - and sometimes conflicts - within the urban contexts. These social relationships are part of a passive network that can exist only thanks to public space, which makes possible the emergence of a common identity for street vendors (Bayat, 2013).

Indeed, informality can be analysed as currency (Marx & Kelling, 2019), namely something spendable in social and spatial terms that is the consequence of a cognitive and self-conscious mode to conceive the processes that make urban spaces function:

> This way of knowing informality, and indeed of doing urban research more generally, presents a rich analysis of the construction of social relations and their spatiality [...] Informality as currency suggests that many other issues are more relevant to people's lives than state law and policy categorisations (Marx & Kelling, 2019, p. 8).

Social relationships and conflicts related to informal street vending within the urban space are the third dimension analysed here.

Street vending as labour

A 1972 ILO study about employment and labour in Kenya was the first attempt to investigate informality as a labour sector

> The bulk of employment in the informal sector, far from being only marginally productive, is economically efficient and profit-making, though small in scale and limited by simple technologies, little capital and lack of links with the other ("formal") sector. Within the latter part of the informal sector are employed a variety of carpenters, masons, tailors and other tradesmen, as well as cooks and taxi-drivers, offering virtually the full range of basic skills needed to provide goods and services for a large though often poor section of the population (ILO, 1972, p. 5).

According to Adhikari (2012), many studies regarding informal labour have been born after the ILO's report.

The urban informal economy creates labour employment, especially in so-called developing countries. Indeed, many states promote informal entrepreneurialism as a poverty alleviation strategy (Adhikari, 2012). A prevalent point in the most recent literature about informal labour and informal street vending is that it is the natural consequence of marginal and precarious conditions experienced by migrants and refugees.

Furthermore, informal street vending can be considered a way for migrants to test the potential success of formal retail business activity in the future (Raijman, 2001).

For instance, Buckley (2013, 2014) analysed informal construction worker strikes in Dubai as a result of the migrant employment system. During the last 20 years, a mass migration of blue-collar workers from South Asia countries occurred in Dubai. Most of these workers are employed in the building sector with informal conditions and low wages. Nevertheless, migrant construction workers have a role in neoliberal urbanisation. Indeed, they are formally and informally employed, and they also produce the urban environment.

Some analyses point out that an intersectional approach constitutes the geographies of unpaid labour. A part of this literature "makes connections between paid and unpaid forms of labour in thinking through the ontologies of 'the workday' or in challenging the urban capitalist 'workplace' as the primary space in which those who labour can be found" (Buckley, 2018, p. 6). Another type of analysis, which can be mostly individuated within feminist points of view inside geography, "highlights the problems of urban economic development policies that lack attention to the relationships between waged and unwaged working life for particular people in the city, and how intersectional social hierarchies based on race, gender, sexuality, and class structure shape those relations" (Buckley, 2018, p. 7). We can place informal street vending between waged and unwaged labour, because it is often considered the consequence of lack of employment and cannot be traced inside the standard waged employment paradigm.

Social-economic analyses tend to investigate the social composition of street vending, identifying class, race, age, and gender as the main features of informal street vendors. However, they do not tend

to focus on labour or to analyse the intersectional constituents of vendors' identity related to labour. Considering examples of specific cases, a study about black women street vendors in Durban is focused on harassment and issues faced by them daily. However, it does not consider the presence of immigrant black women street vendors (Bhoola & Chetty, 2022). In contrast, a study about street vendors in Bogota considers blackness, poorness, and migration as constitutive of vendors' identity and the cause of harassment against them (Munoz, 2018).

Informal street vending is considered a free choice employment that gives more possibilities than other informal jobs (Munoz, 2016; T. D. Wilson, 2014), despite the almost usual lack of specific labour unions and specific assistance policies by municipalities (Bhoola & Chetty, 2022). For instance, a study conducted before the presence of labour union organising (since, lately, Los Angeles is a case which concerns informal street vending labour unions) is about young street vendors in Los Angeles focuses on their strategies and self-consciousness against stigmatisation by some members of their communities and institutional actors (Estrada & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2011).

Small-scale analyses tend to insert informal street vending in a self-employment narrative of survival strategies without bounds with the global economy of cities. Thus, an exhaustive analysis that considers urban and global political and economic processes surrounding informal street vending is necessary (Gauvain, 2008; J. Whitehead, 2012). For instance, in China, informal street vending is not only caused by unemployment but by the presence of low-quality jobs and uneven regional development, primarily related not only to urban poverty but also to rural poverty (Huang et al., 2018).

Informal street vendors are conscious workers employed in global production networks (Alford et al., 2019). They are usually conscious of both their usefulness for the urban economy and precarious conditions (Bernal-Torres et al., 2020). Being conscious of their role in global production networks, migrant street vendors in Barcelona, for example, constituted a labour union that employs creative strategies of dissent due to their being at the threshold of global production networks and their precarious condition. They even created a brand that represents their different and parallel role in the global economy of production and selling of commodities. This unusual perspective is aimed at including informal street vending in global production networks

> Mapping production networks has often resulted in significant omissions in terms of conveying the complexity of the circulation of products through multiple states and processes and of the erasure of actors who fall outside formal and bounded categories of labour (Alford et al., 2019, p. 16).

Another example of being conscious workers is when vendors know the differences between informal and formal labour regimes. Hence, they invent strategies for selling products to formal workers' habits (Milgram, 2011). Sometimes, however, being conscious does not concern only informal street vending but everyday life outside vending for street vendors. For instance, in Jamaica, there is a high possibility that informal street vendors – who are usually urban-rural migrants - live in informal housing due to significant shifts happened in cities thanks to urban reforms (Thomas-Brown, 2013). Namely, the informal street vending activity, performed by the poor population is among the many consequences of adapting to structural changes in the urban economy.

Street vending as economic performance and outcome

A significant part of the literature on street vending is focused on its economic performance, outcomes, and possible obstacles in the startup period.

The economic performance analysis of informal street vending usually shows that street vending is the largest sector in some cities' informal economy market (Sen & Gupta, 2018). Street vending is perceived as an opportunity to compensate for the lack of welfare measures in so-called developing countries, a substantial income for families to afford education, healthcare, and other expenses. For instance, in Kathmandu:

> Most of the vendors who are staying in the street are poor. If they were not allowed to stay in the street, they would have difficulty to live and care their children. If there were right to life, there should be right to do street

> business. So, government should provide proper place to vend (Adhikari, 2018, p. 14).

Thus, street vending can be a significant income generator for poor people. In Kathmandu, 80% of slum dwellers have informal income sources and "Not only rural poor are getting livelihood opportunities in the informal economy, but vendors are also providing goods in a lower price to another section of urban poor that otherwise would be impossible to provide by the urban authorities or by the urban governance system" (Adhikari, 2012, p. 8). This relation could be considered an involuntary form of solidarity and mutual aid economy.

Furthermore, beyond a mere economic analysis of street vending, a group of studies focuses on the causes or factors of a better or worse profit for informal street vendors.

Street vendors' performance related to profit-making provides an example during the Arab Spring period (Brown et al., 2017). Their behaviour was mostly aimed at avoiding police arrests and acting resilience and survival strategies during the economic shock related to Arab Spring insurgencies. Thus, their economic performance was influenced by "their flexibility in making small, incremental changes to their trading patterns, changing what and where they sell and the times at which they trade" (Brown et al., 2017, p. 296).

A multiplicity of variables can influence the presence of a higher or lower income in informal street vending: initial fund for the initial investment, which is usually individually financed without the aid of loans, education level, and hours spent on the activity. Another significant influence is age generation. Besides, there are some personal conditions, such as migration status, gender (women have a lower income), and civil status (being married, for women, implies having a household to attend to), that positively or negatively influence profit-making in the street vending more than others, and age. Indeed, in some cases, street vendors from younger generations tend to have higher profits thanks to better marketing and selling techniques than street vendors from older generations (Maneepong & Walsh, 2013) or

sometimes the ability to obtain raw materials to sell and the absence of responsibilities towards family or community (Tuffour et al., 2022).

Informal street vending can also be analysed through the issues and externalities for some individuals in their daily selling routine and entering the legal street vendors market.

For instance, informal street vendors in Cali have a higher income than one of formal market vendors. However, they have to face daily loans. The possibility of informal daily loans - due to difficult access to bank funding and the lowering of customers visiting the street areas because of security issues - makes Cali's street vendors' life difficult since they earn a daily wage, and it is not enough to repay their debt (Martinez & Rivera-Acevedo, 2018). Thus, informal street vendors can have a positive outcome in economic terms. Nevertheless, they have to manage externalities - especially unsolved debts with high-interest rates - that make their conditions challenging and expose them to more risks than those estimated for formal traders (Martínez et al., 2017).

Migrants and refugees, as actors in Cape Town's informal street vending, have many difficulties in entering the legal vending system. Cape Town has a peculiar policy about street vending: street retail is considered an essential part of the urban economy of Cape Town. Hence, the municipality of the city managed it with economic policies. Nevertheless, the regulated system has limitations in the permits system and spatial limitation of areas adhibited for street retail. The permits system formed an illegal market of permit selling-buying due to the number of individuals wanting to become retailers. Furthermore, this is almost the only way for migrants to enter the start-up phase of formal vending because of the additional issues caused by their "illegal" condition (Rogerson, 2018).

> migrant entrepreneurs face a number of other challenges which constrain the growth of their business enterprises. A complex of issues of residence documentation for asylum seekers and refugees head the list. On an everyday basis such challenges severely impact upon the operations of these

> entrepreneurs because they limit their access to banking facilities and the ability to secure business premises at market rates. In addition, they […] even can result - as in the case of Cape Town - in loss of legal trading rights (Rogerson, 2018, p. 167).

Apart from informal street vending causes and externalities, a key element of informal street vending economic performance is that, despite being informal, it is part of the urban economy, or at least, of a larger supply chain. On the one hand, informal street vendors are an elastic part of a larger formal urban supply chain. Namely, they are economic actors that must be included within the urban economy ecosystem (Sekhani et al., 2019). On the other hand, informal street vendors make an economic profit thanks to the presence or absence of networks surrounding them (Monteith & Lwasa, 2017). These networks are part of a performative logic of businesses that implies leveraging social and material features (Lauermann, 2013). For example, Kebede and Odella (Kebede & Odella, 2014) investigate the social capital of street vendors. Their research investigates the position of street vendors within their social network as a variable that produces higher or lower wealth. The larger the social capital, the higher the profit for street vendors. Furthermore, vendors can weaken or make stronger their social networks in order to take fewer risks for their activity or to obtain higher profits (Baitas, 2019).

Focusing on the economic performance of informal street vending confers dignity upon it. Despite some authors' social network theory perspective, the lenses of economic performance do not explain why and how informal street vending in urban spaces is a contested terrain or a practice that makes negotiations happen around it.

Furthermore, all these standpoints do not consider the relationship between the involved street vendors, their activity, and the space where it occurs. Indeed, the space where informal street vending takes place, when regulated by planning policies and included within the urban

economy, is supposed to be a key element for social stability and to improve earnings for street vendors (Fan et al., 2019; Patel et al., 2021; Uddin, 2021).

Street vending as management of informality: from top-down approaches to negotiations of space

Informal street vending is not only a self-employment strategy to survive within poor living conditions and economic activity within the urban and global economy, but it can be analysed through its evolving presence in the urban space, and the evolving presence of its actors. Namely, informal street vending and vendors evolve within the urban spaces due to their relations with external actors such as institutional actors. In 1993 Portes (1993) called for an approach that goes beyond De Soto's neoliberal proposal of deregulation, liberalisation and the informal employment absorption into the formal sector (namely the structuralist approach) by proposing a social perspective that would take into account social relations and community as the starting point to answer informal employee's need.

First, a robust and often investigated standpoint is one of the state or local institutional actors that usually manages informal street vending with top-down strategies or policies, mainly by formalising or limiting the activities of informal street vending. Another standpoint suggests that the state and planning regimes – informalised entities (Roy, 2009) - can create and support informality to make some economic sectors survive (Clough Marinaro, 2019). As Schindler (2014) has noticed, the attempts to manage informal street vending by the state have very different outcomes also because of the presence of a multiplicity of state and non-state actors which continuously negotiate the terms of practices, laws, and public space usage.

An example of the top-down analysis can be traced in Espinosa Zepeda's (2019) article about Ramblas in Barcelona. The management of informality is a tool of the municipality within an asymmetrical conflict between the municipality and the informal street vendors' union. Through an ordinance, the

municipality of Barcelona decided to manage the issue with punitive treatment since, paradoxically, exceptions for marginalities are considered as discrimination and racism against them (Espinosa Zepeda, 2019). Monteith and Lwasa (2017) investigate how internally displaced populations and refugees cope with informal markets in Uganda as physical and economic places. According to these authors' study, this topic is analysed through the lenses of limitations and laws imposed by the host State. In other words, informal market activities are perceived as the consequence of the lack of property rights and economic provisions policies for migrants guaranteed by the State. Other studies go beyond the analysis of the overall situation of street vending but evaluate policies' efficacy (Devlin, 2011) and suggest others, especially for urban planners (Onodugo et al., 2016).

Nevertheless, the presence of informal street vending regulations does not always guarantee the establishment of legality. However, it can open spaces for the next repressive measures (L. A. Hidalgo, 2022) or new strategies for overcoming formality (Rabossi, 2011), and planners can be the direct authors of spatial exclusion against street vendors (Adama, 2020). A passage necessary for urban planners and policy-makers would be to aim policies and urban planning at welcoming and facilitating the presence of street vendors in the urban context (Piazzoni, 2020), while also considering their importance for the historical urban heritage (Devlin & Piazzoni, 2023). In other words, migrants street vendors' placemaking needs to be empowered instead of being removed or eliminated by discretionary law enforcement, xenophobic practices, and restrictive laws (Piazzoni & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2022).

Furthermore, the state perspective can be ambiguous and ambivalent. For instance, urban policies regarding street vending in Guangzhou are sometimes permissive and sometimes repressive, due to which direction is more convenient at a specific moment (Xue & Huang, 2015). Namely, it would be better to manage informal street vending not by imposing strict formal regulation or deregulation about street vending but by enacting policies that consider how street vending works to empower it rather than repressing it (Huang et al., 2019; Qadri, 2017).

Nevertheless, considering a perspective from below, sometimes street vending is intrinsically a resistance strategy (Sabella & El-Far, 2019), or the attempts of informality management, harassment

or formalisation by the state sometimes produce resistance (Crossa, 2014; Nogueira, 2021) or they are related to a multitude of micro-political strategies enacted by a variety of supposed secondary actors (te Lintelo, 2017). Indeed, some studies concern the relations of street vendors with the state not from an asymmetrical point of view but by considering them as negotiations of space (Milgram, 2014), or they concern "how people make meaning of […]" state "practices and what forms of citizenship or political imaginaries might emerge through—although not solely as a product of, or in resistance to, but simultaneously with - these tactics" (Anjaria, 2016, p. 113).

Negotiations and conflicts between street vendors and the state usually happen around the interpretation and use of public space by them (Melkumyan, 2018). Negotiation or conflict between vendors and the government over the way public space must be, for instance in Georgia, usually led to the displacement of vendors in peripheral urban spaces (Rekhviashvili, 2015), or in Yerevan (Armenia) it led from commercialisation to commodification of public space by governments (Taalaibekova & Melkumyan, 2018).

As it was mentioned in the section that explains the three dimensions of this review, informal street vendors could be considered a passive network or social amovement, as Bayat (2013) suggests. Bayat claims that informal street vending is a quiet encroachment of public space, namely an activity that consists of occupying public spaces by poor segments of the urban population in a passive way in order to survive. Bayat (1997) reports the history of informal street vending in Tehran: they are a group of persons who are sometimes tolerated and sometimes violently expelled or arrested or killed by local authorities and armed groups. For instance, at the beginning of the 1979 Islamic revolution, they were not tolerated by local authorities and Ayatollah Khomeini's supporters because some of them were politicised and spread different political ideas thanks to selling political newspapers and books. After some years, when the so-called political vendors disappeared, the presence of not politicised vendors (equally hated by institutions before) was formalised by local authorities and the state by assigning them specific spaces. This evolution is a clear example of the functioning of passive networks: they are made of ordinary people occupying public spaces, but they can potentially become a source of passive or active resistance when there are attempts to destroy them. In this case, public space becomes the main terrain of conflict of a passive revolution.

One of the key practices of negotiation/conflict around public space is corruption. Corruption is an extorsive practice that impoverishes street vendors and enriches state agents. It can also be considered a way to negotiate the presence in a determined public space (Anjaria, 2016). For instance, sometimes the state has a double function regarding corruption: on the one hand, it avoids costly eviction and punitive sanctions operated by the same state against street vendors. On the other hand, street vendors can take advantage of the authorities-vendor relationships after becoming union leaders by improving their economic position (Hummel, 2017). In other words, state actors can corrupt, or they can be corrupted.

Nevertheless, negotiation and conflict can also be traced outside the relation between vendors and the state. Namely, street vendors' "continued presence reflects different types of gain for various actors facilitated through social relations" (Dragsted-Mutengwa, 2018). Hence, there is a multiplicity of institutional and non-institutional actors on a multi-scalar dimension that operates around informal street vending and produce different spatial outcomes and power relations through proximity (Cattan & Frétigny, 2021; Lata et al., 2019; Taheri Tafti, 2019). For instance, the state can also be taken out of the picture by considering vendors and urban inhabitants around informal street vending as the main actors in making formal urban spaces informal outside legality (Little, 2014; Ojeda & Pino, 2019). A spatial-relational approach outside the state/vendors one helps to explain the complexity of social, economic, and political relations in the urban space. Relations in urban contexts produce space and are produced by space (Fuller & Löw, 2017). For instance, in Mumbai, the existence of informal street vending would not be possible without middle-class customers and associations, which patronise and permit their existence and survival in specific spaces that allow this kind of relation:

> A focus on relations and regimes imposed by powerbrokers would also leave room for a revamped conceptualization of informality as defined in the context of local negotiations over the rules of space occupation and service provision, rather than as attributable to a certain activity. For example, street hawkers who operate just

> outside the gates of markets and gated communities exist in limbo: beyond the reach of middle-class associations but close enough that they are not 'at large' and thereby avoid scrutiny from officials (Schindler, 2017, p. 257).

The negotiated nature of public space and informal vending emerges in Tehran, where there is a silent conflict among women who are informal hawkers, police forces, and middle-class customers who establish a sort of complicit mechanism and rebellious attitude against the government's ideas about public space (Fadaee & Schindler, 2017). Furthermore, negotiations about public space can also depend on the relations with other street vendors and formal businesses. For instance, informal agreements between formal and informal vendors in some Porto Alegre areas usually has a security function against the possibility of robberies or theft against both formal and informal vendors (Coletto, 2010).

González (2019) suggests negotiation and contestation among a series of actors are the consequence of processes such as gentrification, dispossession and displacement that happen inside global cities. This perspective can help to understand other geographies of retail within global cities. Street vending, according to this perspective, is inside the political economy and political and social processes of urban spaces and outside the dichotomies between informality/formality, and Global South/Global North. Another peculiar perspective is the one of Banks, Lombard, and Mitlin (2020), who analysed the conflict and negotiation among the multiplicity of actors involved in the light of the urban accumulation dynamics:

> We propose working towards a deeper political economic analysis of urban informality, viewing it as a site of critical analysis in which political economies at the local, municipal, and national scale are central. Understanding social and political relationships within and between the state and multiple sets of actors across these spaces (and across economic, spatial, and political domains within them) helps us to understand how

> resources are distributed and power secured and consolidated (Banks et al., 2019, p. 223)

Urban informality is enacted through negotiating strategies among a series of extractive institutional and non-institutional actors, including organised crime groups. Furthermore, this point of view highlights - outside the dichotomy of informality-poor groups/formality-state actors - a set of relations that advantages or disadvantages different social, political, and economic actors in very different ways inside capital accumulation logic (Banks et al., 2019).

On the one hand, for instance, a discretional practice is well explained in a series about organised crime called Irmandade (Morelli, 2019): the brother of the main character (the boss of a gang) is a street vendor and selling food is his only source of income, his low income does not allow him to afford to buy again his equipment confiscated by police officers who discover he is selling food without a permit. The natural consequence is that he joins his brother's criminal gang and uses his van, previously used for food retailing, as a means to transport drugs for convicts. Thus, this fictional example shows how police forces can "extract value" from street vending through discretional practices. On the other hand, racket practices are a source of income for organised crime groups that 'extract value' both from formal and informal businesses. The territorial control and illicit accumulation of capital extracted from determined spaces are one of the profitable activities of organised crime. Thus, street vendors can become potential victims of other actors, and this fact puts informal street vending in an ambivalence where it is a positive practice because it could be considered as part of an urban economy of solidarity in marginal communities. However, it is also a practice exposed to harassment and criminal activities. In these cases, there is an ambivalent usage of public space and negotiability: on the one hand, the public space presence of street vendors is negotiated, but on the other hand a multiplicity of actors, especially state and local actors, can have the intention of buying votes or leverage asymmetrical power relations (Khan, 2017), and once the street vendors are not useful to their objectives and logic of public space functioning, they can adopt evictions and criminalization of the same informal vendors (Keck, 2012).

An interstitial activity during and after capitalist crises. Discussion and conclusion on informal street vending

Despite being a practice aimed at economic survival in global cities, the non-static, changing and perceived illegal nature of street vending and its presence in public spaces makes it a practice negotiable, contested, and contestable by institutional and non-institutional subjects with very different points of view about it and a different political and economic profitability.

First, considering it as a negotiated or conflictual space makes the role of the state and institutional actors different. Because of the evidence of a conflict or negotiation around it, it seems that using a governmentality perspective is almost impossible to analyse informal street vending in the urban context. Sometimes, expected positive outcomes for urban poor classes can be deceived by depoliticised organisations with members interested in short-term objectives and personal profits instead of supporting a political project with long-term goals in terms of changing the urban horizon and its politics (Ha & Graaff, 2015, Chapter 2).

Following and intersecting the three directions we have traced inside the literature: informal street vending is a labour with an important entrepreneurial aspect examined from a relational perspective. It changes, influences, and is influenced by internal and external actors and produces favourable or repressive policies and practices (these could be informal or formalised). If we analyse what happens around informal street vending, we could conceive it as a political and economic space in cities that is entrenched to extractive capitalism processes. Value is extracted from the intersection of productive (and reproductive) labour, entrepreneurialism and power relations. Nevertheless, the relation with ongoing processes inside the urban context must be also related to the causes of informal street vending and the prefigurative potentiality of this activity.

Concerning the context, asking when and where informal street vending happens is helpful. Informal street vending is a constant activity endemic to capitalism, which peaks around structural and cyclical crises equally endemic to capitalism (Yamada, 2013). Furthermore,

crises and the personal characteristics of individual sellers also lead them to engage in this work. On a temporal level, therefore, these macro and micro crises produce fractures that, in the case of structural crises, lead to a renewal of the functioning of capitalism and even more significant splits and fractures on a geographical level. A structural crisis thus contributes to diversifying forms of capitalism globally (Yamada, 2013) and regionally. It seems that, by including armed conflicts and natural disasters in crises, street vending is, on the one hand, an activity that is resorted to, especially in times of crisis of varying magnitude, and on the other hand, it is a kind of lifeline or essential activity for the urban economy.

This activity can be a victim of crisis or of overwhelming by institutional and non-institutional actors. On the spatial level, informal street vending produces fragmentation and fracturing of public space, thus producing a spatial crisis concerning temporal ones. As this review shows, this spatial crisis usually has responses of formalisation of activity, very often partial, or eviction through top-down policies or the use of force. Despite this point of view based on asymmetrical power relations, it seems that informal street vending can be the bearer of interstitial instances, which in this specific case can be inserted within the temporal and spatial fractures through their capacity to negotiate with a multiplicity of actors their presence and survival in the urban space. To return to a practical sense, the creation of economic and political policies concerning street vending could start from precisely this interstitial relational capacity or potentiality. Even though informal street vending is a product and producer of fragmentation both temporally and spatially with many side effects, while considering street vendors as possible participant policymakers, the political, economic, and social dimensions of informal street vending must be the starting point to elaborate inclusive policies to insert it into the urban economy ecosystem. Informal street vending could be paradoxically inserted in an anti-privatisation standpoint together with some anticapitalist instances within new municipalist agendas, while also being aware that its institutionalisation or formalisation could follow a logic of privatisation of urban spaces (Janoschka & Mota, 2020). Thus, the

fragmentation of the urban space produced by informal street vending is, namely, a decomposition of urban space that helps to understand how urban space is socially, politically, and economically composed and ordered (Clare, 2018) through conflict and negotiation. Whilst this fragmentation happens, the social dimension of informal street vending is not separated from the urban spaces and processes, as some feminist and critical urban studies seem to suggest (Piazzoni, 2022), but it interacts with and thanks to them. Informal street vending modifies urban spaces and processes and is modified by urban spaces and processes.

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WHAT YOU ARE, TAKES YOU FAR

Chapter 2

The *halal* meat sector: a diverse economic sector as a potential producer of conflicts.

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Introduction

Despite its expansion, the production and retail of *halal* products remains an overlooked topic in the social sciences. Studies on Islamic communities and places in countries with a non-Muslim majority have primarily concentrated on tensions centred on mosques and the veil in urban settings. The term *halal* refers to anything that the Islamic faith permits, as opposed to *haram*, which refers to everything that Islam strongly forbids.: "To the non□Muslim, it is a word that is often exclusively associated with the foods that Muslims are allowed to eat, but in reality it is a term that describes everything that it is permissible for a Muslim to do, both in deed and thought" (Ramadan Al-Teinaz & A Abd El-Rahim, 2020, p. 10), namely "this system of precepts finds its most proper dimension in a theological perspective in which the believer is called upon to work out ways of making the best use of himself with a view to a more active and successful adherence to the divine will" (Rhazzali, 2014). According to Arslan (2014), because of the diverse religious interpretations and intellectual viewpoints on the matter, it is difficult to establish a comprehensive and proper definition of *halal*.
In the current study, the broader religious concept of *halal* is limited to food, namely meat:

> Examples of Halal food, including its products and derivatives, are milk (from cows, sheep, camels, and goats), honey, fish, plants that are not intoxicant, fresh or naturally frozen vegetables, fresh or dried fruits, legumes and nuts, and grains such as wheat and rice. Animals such as cows, sheep, goats, deer, moose, chicken,

> ducks, and game birds are Halal. However, such animals must be slaughtered according to Islamic rites before they can be consumed (Latif et al., 2014, p. 88)

Nevertheless, beyond the religious notion of *halal*, there is a billion-dollar market worldwide consisting of products and services, including cosmetics, tourism, and food products. Its importance in a diversified urban economy must be acknowledged and analysed.

This article aims to construct a 'state of the art' of the literature about the *halal* meat sector, particularly concerning production and retail. As it is considered in this article, production concerns the practices related to ritual slaughtering, logistics, and *halal* conformity certifications (if present). Thus, it is the production part of the bigger *halal* chain. As it is considered in this review, retailing practices include consumers' behaviour and the presence of *halal* butchers or supermarkets with *halal* products sectors in the urban context.

Following the introduction of a theoretical framework, the papers examined in this study are classified into subcategories. Each subdivision accomplishes qualitative analysis of a modest number of articles (particularly the sections on consumer behaviour and the supply chain) that have a similar stance on *halal*. Thus, the section on consumer behaviour, for example, reviews considerably fewer articles than those contained in databases since the latter is somewhat comparable to those presented as examples.

The first and second subdivisions focus on economic perspectives on *halal*: the first is mainly concerned with customer behaviour. In contrast, the second is focused on *halal* as a supply chain process. The third and fourth sections are related to spatial and urban dynamics, respectively: the third is linked to establishing *halal* urban areas, and the fourth is about *halal* in connection to urban processes and conflicts. First, after clarifying some aspects of *halal* meat production, describing the methodology employed, and providing a theoretical framework related to diverse economies and alternative food networks, the article presents a state-of-the-art study of the literature on the *halal* sector, primarily *halal* meat. The discussion

section attempts to demonstrate the sometimes-problematic outcomes of this sector's presence in the urban context. The conclusion highlights the gaps that require to be filled by future studies.

The research domain

Some features of the *halal* industry must be clarified for readers.

To begin with, the *halal* sector does not exclusively include meat production and retail; nonetheless, the most significant portion of *halal* production and retail is dedicated to meat; this article focuses primarily on the *halal* meat sector.

Second, differences must be established between countries wherein *halal* meat is produced and sold. The proper distinction is between countries with a Muslim majority and those with a non-Muslim majority. Countries with a non-Muslim majority can be classified into two categories: those with a mixed and sometimes recent migration of Muslims and those with distinct Muslim ethnic minorities, such as China's Hui ethnic minority or Russia's mainly Muslim Tatars. This distinction is fundamental since the *halal* sector is a worldwide phenomenon, and non-Muslim countries are the major producers of *halal* meat, notwithstanding this distinction (Husseini de Araújo, 2019). As a result, it should not be assumed that countries with a non-Muslim majority are uninterested in manufacturing and distributing *halal* meat.

Third, the *halal* meat industry is currently separated into two main "modes of production". On the one hand, it is more strongly tied to urban ethnic groups functioning, consisting of direct and religious community interactions limited to certain urban areas. On the other hand, it may be based on a broad distribution that is partly secularised and is more oriented towards "state discourses, institutional certification methods, and science" (Fischer, 2011, p. 165).

According to Bergeaud-Blackler, there are two models similar to those previously mentioned: an industrial one created by Nestlé and South-East Asian countries and a neighbourhood-local one (a model created by Muslims for Muslims), which is based on face-to-face interactions and is supported by Turkey and the Gulf States (Bergeaud-Blackler, 2013; Gauthier, 2019; Kuppinger, 2014b).

One or both of these modes of production may predominate or coexist in the same urban context. Consequently, a *halal* meat consumer can go to a local *halal* meat store or a supermarket to get the needed products.

Research methodology

This literature review focuses on research regarding the *halal* industry that has been examined from various angles. State of the art in the literature about *halal* meat is determined by qualitatively reviewing the articles and categorising them according to disciplines and points of view.

The most significant proportion of the papers examined here is in the social sciences and written in English.

When considering publications in languages other than English, papers in the social sciences sector written in French are the second source of this review.

A significantly reduced number of sources consists of articles in Spanish and Italian. There is a subtle difference between studies in French and English. On the one hand, sources written in English are more comprehensive in terms of countries and perspectives analysed, they are a heterogeneous group. On the other hand, sources written in the French language have a more ancient history of analyses about halal, the so-called laicité heavily influences their

perspective, and they primarily focus on francophone countries, especially France.

Most of the articles analysed and classified here are not older than 2007.

According to Bergeaud-Blackler (2017b), *halal* is a market standardisation that originated from the intersection of religious fundamentalism with neoliberalism at the end of the twentieth century (according to this scholar, Iran was one of the primary inventors of *halal* in the 1980s). Muslim-majority countries established and grew the *halal* market, which became a global market in the early twenty-first century, in the 2010s. Consequently, finding articles before 2007 is complex. When *halal* became a global industry due to Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Malaysia, and Turkey, the number of studies increased exponentially.

The database of abstracts and citations Scopus, Google Scholar, and Cairn were the primary sources for finding articles, while Google Books was the primary source for books. The phrases 'halal' and 'halal meat' were used to find articles and books. Although nineteen books were found, only four are examined in this literature review. The books were chosen based on their availability and contribution to the general discussion over *halal* food and meat rather than their unique contribution to specific parts of the *halal* sector.

There were 273 articles found, with 58 being examined in this literature review. The low number of articles examined is due to the significant number of similarities among many; consequently, the articles examined here may be regarded as precise representations of *halal* food and meat perspectives and approaches.

Each article was also chosen using an exclusion-restriction procedure. First, the papers were sorted into academic categories such as humanities, economics, and social sciences. Second, the articles were sorted by year (not prior to 2007). Third, the process was improved by reviewing each abstract and rejecting those that did not belong to *halal* meat or the general notion of *halal* products; for example, a study on *halal* toothpaste was deleted since it was out of context. Another strategy for finding publications was to search the references of the latest studies that included them in their references.

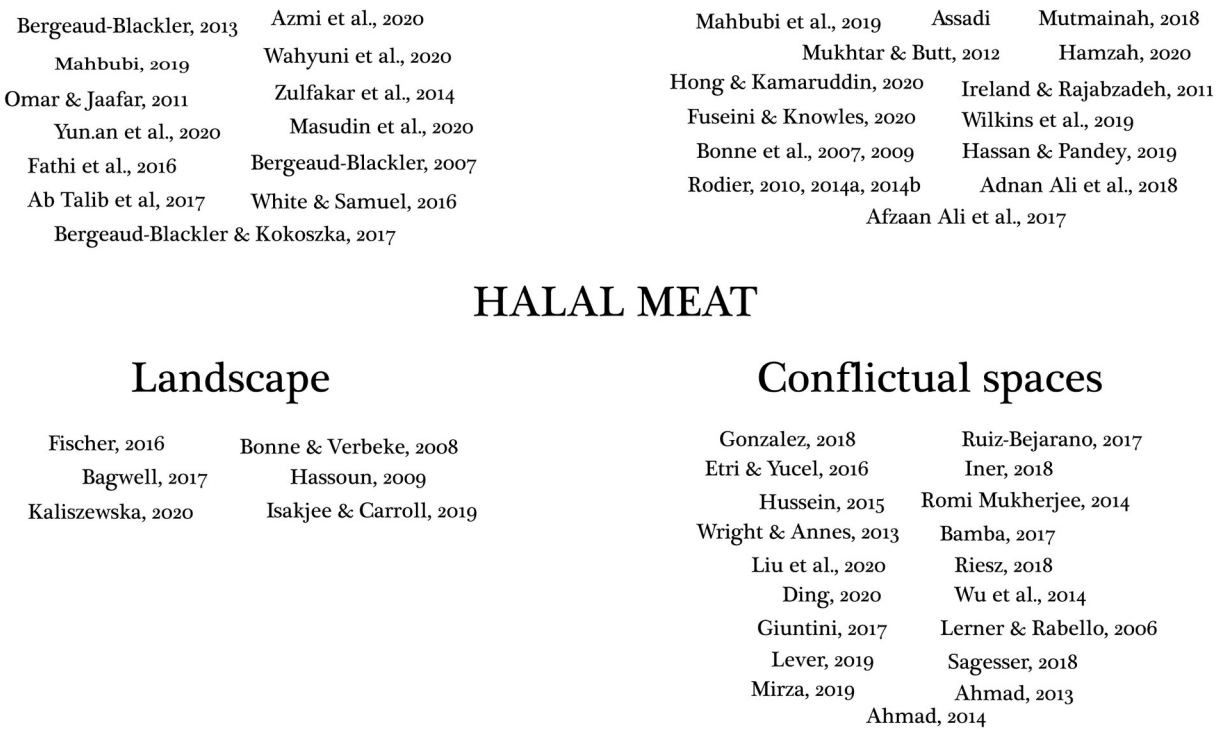

Figure 1 Conceptual map. Halal meat: diverse economy; supply chain; consumers' behaviour; conflictual spaces

Halal: between diverse economies and alternative food networks

Halal encompasses, far beyond culinary rules, all our acts and behaviour. It is an ethic, a translation into daily life, of its obedience and adherence to the divine commandments. It involves eating, drinking, dressing, but also working, marrying and producing according to God's laws. Thus, before eating a food, it is advisable to ask oneself whether it is halal in itself, but also whether the means and

> conditions of its acquisition, production and distribution are also lawful (Prudhomme, 2016, p. 126).

Halal informs all aspects of life for a Muslim. Concerning *halal* as a sector within the global economy, it also informs how its commodities are produced and sold. First of all, as suggested by Sayer (2000), capitalist economies and critical and radical political economic positions are always moral. Examining the *halal* meat production and retail sector is significant because it naturally provides a moral (and, in this case, religious) critique of the economy's factual functioning.

Furthermore, the religious and potentially multi-ethnic characteristics extend beyond a simple agglomeration-clustering phenomenon, not as studies on ethnic business clustering in urban contexts typically show (Coe et al., 2013; Kaplan & Li, 2006; Zhuang, 2019).

When we think about *halal* in countries with a non-Muslim majority, we immediately think about Islamic communities as part of a minority in the urban context. A mistake to avoid is associating minorities to an "ontological and topological" (Roy, 2011, p. 235) urban subalternity and give them "unique political agency". These minorities, on the other hand, have the power to transform urban space and contribute to the categories of "peripheries, urban informality, zones of exception, and grayspaces". A critical examination of the *halal* phenomenon must consider that, as a minority habit, it might be vulnerable to urban processes. One of these processes is the displaceability (Yiftachel, 2020) of *halal* meat-related activities and spaces, as demonstrated by the Indian city cases in this article.

Nonetheless, a universalist theory that incorporates all *halal* types cannot explain the *halal* economy. A decolonial view on the urban environment is a beginning point for analysis. Specifically, this decolonial approach (Schulz, 2017) considers *halal* as part of a pluriverse, a variegated possibility with multiple options and modalities for its production and retail in the urban context. As a result, Islamic communities might be seen as producers or agents who, in this situation, promote a new mode of production and retail based on a diversified religious

connection between human and non-human actors. According to this viewpoint, geographical and human margins become constitutive of centres (Sultana, 2021), and so margins are tied to centres by constructing them.

Despite the heterogeneity of the *halal* food industry, it is critical to recognise it as a diverse economy with unique characteristics that occasionally intersect the alternative food networks notions inside countries with a non-Muslim majority.

First and foremost, it creates diversity within the economy by distinguishing itself from the prohibited, namely, "what is declared *haram* leads to the commercialisation of its *halal* version" (Bergeaud-Blackler, 2017b, p. 55). For instance, "declaring pork DNA or substances declared impure leads to the halalisation of fish". Thus, the *halal* sector is indeed something diverse, something that has peculiar features inside the economy, and it can be an example of "new worlds we can imagine and create, ones in which we enact and construct rather than resist (or succumb to) economic realities" (Gibson-Graham, 2008, p. 619).

The *halal* sector is, for some scholars, intrinsically capitalist and industrial (Bergeaud-Blackler, 2017b). However, in its heterogeneous outcomes and global concurrency regime, this sector has specific features that make it diverse inside the mainstream economy. It can be considered near to a "niche-based capitalism" which "is not omnipotent. Indeed, almost by definition, it is disorganized" (Tsing, 2009, p. 172). And if it is not capitalism, it is a different line inside capitalism (Dixon, 2011), it is the performative creation of new spaces: "Recognizing the existence of diverse economic practices is a first step to rejecting the hegemony of capitalism and signals the beginning of a process to relearn, rethink and re-create new economic and social realities" (A. D. Wilson, 2013, p. 16).

Although some authors consider alternative food networks as part of a white and elitist approach to food and environment (Edwards, 2016; Slocum, 2007), the moral component and Islamic communities' desire for distinctiveness and non-assimilation in countries with non-Muslim majorities bring the *halal* sector extremely close to the concept of alternative food

networks. Tregear (2011) outlined the key characteristics of alternative food networks: they are networks with a distinct local dimension, they are easily viable for all network members, and they are environmentally responsible. Furthermore, Sarmiento (2017, p. 485) individuates three different approaches to alternative food networks: "food and embodiment, the diverse economies of food, and more-than-human food geographies". However, because *halal* is a local phenomenon with a transnational and global component, including it in alternative food networks might be problematic if it lacks one of the main features typically associated with alternative food networks. As a result, in countries with a non-Muslim majority, the *halal* sector can be viewed as an alternative food network with varying degrees of alterity (Gritzas & Kavoulakos, 2016). Furthermore, if we consider it a diverse sector and, at times, an alternative food network, particularly in countries with a non-Muslim majority, this perspective explains both of these conditions of *halal*'s alterity and diversity: "Although they depend on capitalist markets for their material and social reproduction, alternative economic spaces can develop with different operational logics and value systems" (Goodman et al., 2013, p. 9).

Halal meat consumption as a moral and religious practice?

Several studies focus on *halal* as a customer-oriented market. The religious and moral impact is a general characteristic of *halal* purchasing decisions in Muslim and non-Muslim majority countries. On the one hand, Muslim-majority countries have *halal* customers who want secular-material and healthful *halal* food features. On the other hand, *halal* meat customers in non-Muslim majority countries prefer to prioritise religious and moral values. The following are a few studies on consumer attitudes regarding *halal* meat.

Generalisation biases must be avoided when religion impacts consumer purchase behaviour. As a result, we must examine a variety of factors, including the individual's level of religiosity, ethnic community, Islamic school of thought, and whether they live in a Muslim-majority or non-Muslim-majority country (AssadiDjamchidA, n.d.).

According to a recent study of consumer preferences in Indonesia, buyers select *halal* beef with specific traits (the red uniform colour indicates an excellent quality of the meat for most consumers) (Mahbubi et al., 2019). The necessity of religious certification and material quality for clients distinguishes the *halal* meat industry in this scenario. Another research on the behaviour of *halal* customers in Indonesia found that material, moral, and religious assessments all impact consumer decisions in some manner, either simultaneously or partially (Mutmainah, 2018). According to a Malaysian study, *halal* food's attributes impact product purchasing far more than social word-of-mouth among Muslim consumers (Hamzah et al., 2020).

Concerns about *halal* products in UAE and Pakistan (Muslim-majority countries) are about the 'halalness' of products and health (Ireland & Rajabzadeh, 2011). Thus, in Muslim-majority countries, there are also health concerns. Food is *halal* not only because it has a specific production and certification but also because of its health safety. Another concern in these Muslim-majority countries is the *halal* and sharia conformity of foreign firms' products (Mukhtar & Butt, 2012). The country of origin of *halal* items might be as essential in countries with a non-Muslim majority (Hong & Kamaruddin, 2020).

Other studies focus on consumer behaviour in non-Muslim majority countries. In countries with a non-Muslim majority, national and religious identity are the most influential factors in customers' desire to buy *halal* products (Wilkins et al., 2019). For example, a study on *halal* meat buyers in the UK was conducted about stunning or not stunning during the slaughter. Most consumers and religious leaders interviewed for the survey agreed to eat only meat from animals that had not been stunned (Fuseini & Knowles, 2020). Muslim self-identity and

acculturation influence Muslim consumers' purchasing decisions in countries with a non-Muslim majority (Bonne et al., 2007, 2009). Furthermore, the presence of peers (other Muslims) or family members impacts *halal* meat eating. For instance, the more young Indian *halal* food consumers distance theirself from family members, the less they consume *halal* food (Hassan & Pandey, 2019).

In France, the perception of *halal* consumption and rituality shifts radically from generation to generation. First-generation Muslim migrants tend to follow a conception of *halal* based on their relationship with their country of origin. While subsequent generations have a different perspective on the phenomenon, which is more related to adherence to the Islamic community, they feel part of an *umma* that has no boundaries with their parents' homeland (Rodier, 2010, 2014a, 2014b).

When it comes to purchasing *halal* meat, Chinese native Muslims do not have a distinct consumer behaviour but are impacted by self-identity, dietary acculturation, trust, and moral duty (Adnan Ali et al., 2018). Finding *halal* meat in China can be challenging, but customers do not see this as a barrier since they consider it essential for their religious diet (Afzaal Ali et al., 2017).

Halal meat as a supply chain process

Another group of studies about *halal* meat analyse it under the lenses of the supply chain, most of them focus on a specific aspect of the production but not on the whole chain.

As Bergeaud-Blackler has noticed:

> The proper functioning of a market requires that the players agree on relatively simple harmonised rules of production. The first consequence is that, in defining what is permissible, the religious have been overtaken by the combined force of

> diasporic and market dynamics, and are only now beginning to question whether they should jump on the bandwagon. (Bergeaud-Blackler, 2013, p. 80)

According to Mahbubi (2019), the diversity of *halal* meat production and retail originates from the need to manage each step of the commodity chain and collaborate with all actors in the production chain.

Nonetheless, only a few studies examine *halal* food production as an entire supply chain (Azmi et al., 2020). Therefore they focus on the entire production process, whereas other studies look at individual segments of *halal* meat production. For example, a study focusing on slaughtering and slaughterhouses might be conducted utilising a value chain analysis of this specific sector (Wahyuni et al., 2020).

Animal feeding and slaughtering techniques are essential aspects of a *halal* food supply chain (Omar & Jaafar, 2011). As a result, the sacred aspect of slaughtering is linked with the more material aspect of animal feeding. Therefore, religious and material aspects are crucial in obtaining a *halal* product. The most significant aspect of the *halal* food supply chain is integrity, which is ensured by a high level of collaboration among all chain members (Zulfakar et al., 2014). As shown in a study conducted in Malaysia, *halal* integrity is also the primary priority in logistics. However, applying *halal* norms for logistics within the *halal* food supply chain is often optional, even if it would increase the prestige and trust in *halal* food producers and retailers (Yunan et al., 2020).

Furthermore, there is a link between logistics performance and customer preferences: the more efficient the logistics sector is within the supply chain, the more customers will purchase *halal* food products (Masudin et al., 2020). Consumers are also willing to pay for more expensive halal products if logistics meet *halal* standards (Fathi et al., 2016).

Other scholars (Bergeaud-Blackler, 2007) investigate the details of slaughtering, particularly the challenges experienced by ritual *halal* slaughtering in non-Muslim countries, despite the

fact that, for example, legislation in Europe enables ritual slaughtering due to its religious nature.

Another element of *halal* meat production processes that need additional investigation is the certification process. The significant degree of variety across labels and *halal* certifications makes *halal*'s success less successful in comparison to the unambiguous worldwide mark and customer choice (White & Samuel, 2016).

Nevertheless, a rigorous *halal* certification process guarantees *halal* food integrity and improves business performance (Ab Talib et al., 2017). While some countries with a Muslim majority and an economic interest, such as Malaysia, have their *halal* products standardised, some other countries tried to reach an agreement about the standardisation of *halal* in the European Union (Bergeaud-Blackler & Kokoszka, 2017). The study of *halal* production and retail as a supply chain can be associated with the modernised and inclusive production mode, which is an excellent distribution and certification system. This approach demonstrates many gaps in the literature about food *halal* production and retail. These gaps are illustrated in the conclusion.

Halal sector as a creator of spaces and landscapes

As Calder (2020) suggested, a religious sector inside the liberal capitalist market is not something that endangers its continuation. However, it is well accepted by it as a sector that creates new opportunities. Thus, the recent halalisation of a taken-for-granted secular market or the mixing and influencing of Islamic religious rules and capitalist rules is a fact that is opposed to the supposed incompatibility of religion and market (even though Islam supports entrepreneurialism with ethical rules).

As per Fischer (2016), Singapore, a Muslim-majority country, has expanded the *halal*-certified product market to become a worldwide force in *halal* product exports. Singapore's *halal* sector has shifted from a bazaar economy based on locally trusted *halal* butchers and stores to one firmly dependent on excellent distribution and certificate audits. Belgium's condition differs from that of Singapore. Muslim communities trust local butchers more than major distributors of *halal*-certified items (Bonne & Verbeke, 2008).

We cannot claim that *halal* retail occurs just because of excellent certified distribution internationally but because *halal* food production, certification, and retail scenario varies in each country with a non-Muslim or Muslim majority. Nonetheless, the number of *halal*-certifying institutions and businesses worldwide is growing. These businesses demonstrate the heterogeneous character of the *halal* economic sector.

Halal meat production and retail in Islamic neighbourhoods are part of an Islamic sub-economy, which Kuran (1995) describes as the result of religious shame and isolation from regular economic channels. Thus, this sub-economy is undoubtedly the consequence of exclusion, but it can be a safe refuge for Islamic marginalities in the urban economy (Bagwell, 2017). This process constitutes an "incorporation of the signs of the 'Other' which will only have been fully (identified as) "Other" at the crucial moment of its entry into the market and the city" (Hassoun, 2009, p. 71).

Halal, in a broad sense, constitutes landscapes: "the network/meshwork character of the Islam-inspired economic space, where economic and moral dimensions are interwoven with formal and informal norms and regulations, and where social life has its materiality and temporality" (Kaliszewska, 2020, p. 4). The perception of their own identity and belonging to specific places or groups related to *halal* food availability can influence Muslim minorities' choice of areas or specific neighbourhoods (Isakjee & Carroll, 2019). Hence, considering it from a merely spatial and urban perspective, Muslim minorities in countries with a non-

Muslim majority can constitute clusters in the urban context by choosing to move to specific spaces while being influenced by *halal* food availability.

Halal food production and retail create new spaces and possibilities within the urban context. This creation happens in countries with a Muslim and non-Muslim majority, as demonstrated by the previous examples, thanks to its local and great distribution modes of production.

Halal as a conflictual space

The preceding sections demonstrated the existence of the *halal* sector as a distinct sector with distinct characteristics: consumer attention to secular traits and religious requirements. The long-chain distribution (one of standardisation and openness) demonstrated a variety comprised of a regulated chain and certificates. A short-chain approach (characterised by *umma* inspiration while seeming fundamentalist) might demonstrate face-to-face retail based on community trust. This diverse economy produces various urban environments and landscapes (if we consider the entire chain, regional and transnational spaces).

As Gonzalez (2018) explains, markets as alternative spaces constitute a challenge for urban processes, including gentrification and regeneration. Contested markets are frequently centres of conflict. Nonetheless, contestation and conflict are founded on a desire for involvement and the expectation that even Muslim communities will contribute to urban space development. However, as a diverse economy, the *halal* sector causes friction, especially in countries with a non-Muslim majority. As demonstrated by the following instances, retail and consumption places and even some parts of the production chain, such as slaughtering, could be sources of potential conflict.

The existence of religious places and visible indicators of Islamic religious adherence are frequent sources of Islamophobia. Islamophobia is classified into two types: personal attacks of varying intensity and institutional Islamophobia, which occurs when legislation and public discourse are oriented against the Islamic faith. Economic areas associated with *halal* food are less likely to be targets of Islamophobic personal attacks. However, these spaces are occasionally targets of institutional Islamophobia and organised religious and racial hatred campaigns, such as those in Australia (Ruiz-Bejarano, 2017) against *halal* certification, which frequently associated the *halal* sector with terrorism (Etri & Yucel, 2016; Iner, 2018): "The campaign against halal certification reveals a shift in the racialisation of Muslims in that the object of fear is not vilified for its visible transformation of the Australian landscape, but for its near – invisibility" (Hussein, 2015, p. 87). Another example of an Islamophobic campaign against *halal* is the one conducted by the Front National and French media against adding *halal* burgers to a fast-food chain's menu (Romi Mukherjee, 2014; Wright & Annes, 2013). Since the early colonial era, for instance, Christian religious groups have been conducting Islamophobic campaigns against *halal* in Western and Eastern African countries (Bamba, 2017).

Very few studies focus on *halal* food practices in public spaces as a cultural conflict. This kind of analysis can only be conducted in countries with Muslim minorities. In countries with a Muslim majority, the Islamic Feast of Sacrifice mainly consists of public lamb slaughtering. In countries with a non-Muslim majority, public slaughtering causes a conflict between institutional and non-institutional actors. For instance, in France, there were spaces dedicated to the slaughtering on that day, but lately, the public slaughtering has become organised by specific services on behalf of Muslim families, or it is performed in secret, or it is substituted with charity for poor people or a sum of money sent to families. The latest fact happened because of opposition within public opinion and laws that prohibit slaughtering in public spaces (Brisebarre, 2017).

In Muslim-majority countries, eating *halal* food in public and private areas is standard practice. In non-Muslim majority countries, on the other hand, producing and selling *halal* food can be recognised as a diverse ethnic economic activity to fulfil the religious and cultural demands of a sometimes-growing religious minority. Food consumption patterns among China's Hui ethnic group and Spain's Muslim minority produce tensions or integration in public spaces (Liu et al., 2020; Riesz, 2018). Despite regulations ensuring the continuation of a peaceful multicultural environment and religious freedom (Liu et al., 2020), a public debate regarding *halal* food dietary requirements in China tends to produce conflict between Muslim ethnic groups and the state. The effort at secular reform of *halal* food produced an identity dilemma for China's Muslim ethnic minorities, not only because of high or low-intensity disputes with the state but also because of internal disagreements among the same minorities (Ding, 2020; Wu et al., 2014).

Another tiny subfield of study extends beyond *halal* food's cultural and identity importance to examine its existence in connection to urban political and economic dynamics. When investigating ritual butchering, one of the concerns is animal welfare. These studies frequently emphasise animal pain throughout the operation (Giuntini, 2017). The discussion about ritual slaughtering in Europe (and elsewhere) primarily concentrates on animal welfare (Lerner & Rabello, 2006), and the media frequently leverages the subject for political and Islamophobic goals (Lever, 2019). For *kosher* and *halal* meat, ritual slaughtering without stunning is illegal in Belgium. The discussion about ritual slaughtering without stunning focused on the tension between animal welfare and religious freedom. As one of the Jewish community's leaders pointed out, the prohibition on cruelty does not apply to hunting; this would indicate that the debate is about religious and cultural issues rather than the general well-being of animals, especially since the traditional aspect of hunting activity justified the exception (Sägesser, 2018).

In India, the *halal* sector has produced and continues to create tensions in urban areas. The majority's hostility to the Islamic minority's *halal* slaughter of cows in Mumbai is motivated by religious, political, and economic factors. In India, *halal* butchers are typically stigmatised labourers, and the opposition to cow slaughtering has also resulted in violent outcomes due to Hindu nationalist-religious discourse. The opposition's sanitary and polluting reasons are religious-moral (workers dealing with dirt, blood, and waste material) and environmental (Mirza, 2019).

Exclusion, marginalisation, and displacement of *halal* meat workers in New Delhi are comparable to those in Mumbai. *Halal* meat is a "site of relegation, socially and spatially" in Delhi (Ahmad, 2014, p. 29). *Halal* meat abandoned established logic and places to develop new landscapes. The marginal activity of *halal* meat slaughtering and sale was forced to the periphery, frequently resulting in politically organised opposition from residents of regions designated for *halal* meat production. Local policies that disposed of the dislocation and separation of cow slaughtering and retail contained a religious-cultural and modernising logic. Religious because they endangered religious minority with hidden religious motivations, and modernising because, in the name of progress and production efficiency, they created a production chain by dislocating cow slaughtering and raising the price of products due to dislocation (Ahmad, 2013).

Concluding remarks and future directions

Most of the literature on *halal* meat does not investigate the urban context but focuses on specific production or retail aspects. Although this fact, this article tries to shed light on how the *halal* sector can create conflicts within the urban (and sometimes regional) space.

The significant differentiation and variety of *halal* meat that emerges from this literature must be inserted within a political economy of meat informed by economic, cultural, and political aspects:

> It should be clear by now that the geographies of meat are differentially intertwined (through time and space) with culture, political systems, economy and technoscience, across scales. From the meanings of meat through to the final act of consuming food animals, the experiences are highly varied from the standpoints of humans (as consumers or workers) and animals (as food to be consumed). Yet, what we see as an inevitable trend should be obvious enough: the cumulative commodification of food animals where their very essence and bodies are governed and disciplined, underpinned by (global) capital and consistently invasive science and technologies (Neo & Emel, 2018, p. 142).

Thus, the geographies of meat present a natural differentiation that becomes part of a diverse economy in the case of *halal* meat (sometimes very similar to an alternative food network in countries with a non-Muslim majority). Two elements are essential regarding the two modes of production individuated. On the one hand, the logic of integrity and controlled chain (through certification) is part of the great distribution model. On the other hand, the element to take into account as the more local one is the face-to-face retail with local butcher shops (not only as retailers but as important actors inside a community) that is part of the local ethnic short-chain economy model. These two elements constitute the main specific features that make the *halal* sector a diverse economy.

Globally, *halal* is a new and exponentially growing sector. It is a methodological mistake to describe it as an invented tradition, as Bergeaud-Blackler (2017a) does, because this author sometimes relates it to a potential fundamentalist and Islamic radicalism threat. Instead, to also relate it to the urban context, it can be easily connected to the concept of *hijra* described by Simone:

> Often reduced to a notion about fleeing from oppression, hijra is rather the cultivation of a transformative event, a volitional suspension of the rules, the making temporary all that seems definitive. Hijra means being exposed to the world, not as an established, pre-fixed geography, but as something in motion, just as the earth, with its tectonic shifts constantly rearranges itself. It is exposure to the movements of the world as that which is familiar defamiliarizes itself and finds new forms and venues of recognition (A. M. Simone, 2020, p. 5).

Concerning the studies analysed in this review: three significant gaps must be filled. Firstly, there is a lack of studies on the whole chain of production and retail that would help to identify issues and strong points within the overall process. Secondly, there are no exhaustive studies about the *halal* certification system as a global system. Thirdly, studies on retail exclusively focus on consumption but not on retail places such as local butcher shops and their actors.

Using a diverse economic perspective makes it possible to formulate specific research questions for future studies. Is there an absolute separation between the long-chain and short-chain modes of production, or are they related? Do the diverse economy of *halal* and its actors producers of different spaces in urban and regional terms? Do these diverse spaces produced by a diverse economic sector always produce spaces of potential conflict?

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WHAT YOU ARE, TAKES YOU FAR

Chapter 3

Muslim spaces in Turin: a relational perspective, beyond secularisation and sacredness

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Introduction

Sacred spaces are part of the everyday life of Muslims, especially in countries with non-Muslim majorities. Among Islamic spaces are not only the worship ones, but also the ones related to sacredness outside worship. Nevertheless, most studies regarding Islamic spaces only take into account worship places, and not unofficially religious places.

On the one hand, the ongoing debate about secularisation is mostly based on the distinction between sacred and secular spaces. On the other hand, considering the specific case study selected for this research, in studies about the Islamic spaces in Italy, little attention has been paid to the presence of Islamic spaces which are not worship spaces and their relationship with the worship spaces, and with nearby urban spaces.

Considering the urban context and the relationship with the spaces and the religious community of reference, this paper tries to fill the gap in urban and geographical studies and to offer a different methodological perspective that takes into account several factors. That is, the spatial factor understood as the presence of clustering and diffusion of economic and religious activities, the ethnographic factor understood as further investigation of the spatial aspect and consciousness of presence in the space of the city, and the visual factor understood as photographic investigation of the manifestation of religion in the urban spaces.

This study aims to discover how the sacredness and secularisation of Muslim spaces (including non-worship spaces) are experienced in the context of relations between these spaces, and with urban spaces as well.

The paper is subdivided as follows: a theoretical section consisting of a brief overview of the theoretical concepts; a section framing the case study; a methodological overview; a section illustrating the results; discussion, and conclusions.

From the sacred to the secularised: a relational proposal

Defining the sacred, defining the secular

Defining secularism is a difficult task because of its heterogeneous outcomes. Its precise meaning and functioning are still part of an ongoing debate between supporters and critics of secularism. According to Kettell (2019) the conceptual definition of secularism can be summarised as follows: "A normative commitment to neutrality on the part of the state toward religious affairs, necessitating that the state should neither favor, disfavor, promote, nor discourage any particular religious (or nonreligious) belief and viewpoint over another. In institutional terms this is typically understood as meaning a commitment to upholding the separation of church and state". Nevertheless, secularism has not the same functioning and outcomes in every country where it is present, and the purpose and results of it are criticised all over the countries where its logic operates (Bhargava, 1999, pp. 2–3).

Secularism should follow a topological turn concerning how power relations between state and religion are currently conceived in studies about secularism: "Mirroring the shift from topographical (power unfolds in space) to topological (power composes space) understandings of socio-spatial relations, we need to shift from topographical (power unfolds

between religion and state) towards topological understandings of secularism (power composes religion and state)" (Müller, 2021, p. 9).

The critical secularism school, especially Talal Asad's work (1993, 2003), has demonstrated that secularism – born inside the European dichotomy between the church and state - functions in relation with the existence of the religious other (Manouchehrifar, 2018). Mahmood (2006), while analysing the strategies adopted by the US in the so-called War on Terror, suggests that liberal secularism is not only a project based on the separation between religious and non-religious spaces and the guarantee of religious freedom, but a project that regulates how subjectivities behave and live their faith. According to Enayat (2017, Chapter 8), Asadian scholars share state-phobia as a way to analyse secularism, thus, Asad's point of view supports the idea of secularism as an elitist doctrine of modernism against religious masses, and as an instrument of all kind of states, liberal ones and less liberal ones.

Nevertheless, all these definitions and modes of secularism are related to a national-statist level, but they do not take into consideration the existence of the local-urban level, where the outcomes of secularism and the regulation of spaces on the basis of secularism are helpful to understand how secularism regulate everyday life, spaces, and multireligious contexts. The Islamic religion, for instance is one of the most debated and under scrutiny religions within the context of liberal secularism in cities (Martínez-Ariño, 2021, Chapter 4).

Thus, secular spaces must be considered in relation with religious spaces. Furthermore, specific spaces related to sacred or sacred in the past should be investigated through the lenses of sacralisation or secularisation within the constant shift of the urban context. Hence, if on the one hand, one of the explicit objectives of secularism is to make religion a private matter inside private spaces, on the other hand, modern religious groups still operate outside the distinction between the public and private by negotiating their presence in the cities, and by experiencing sacredness within spaces outside the worship ones (Chen, 2016; Kiong & Kong, 2010). The sacred concerns a landscape of power and the practices necessary to maintain it.

Thus, it is necessary to understand "How the sacred (and therefore the profane) can become the object not only of religious thought but of secular practice too" (Asad, 2003, p. 36).

Most of the research conducted in the field of religion in the urban context, however, is about worship places (Peach, 2016) but not about other spaces related to faith and sacredness. Kong (2010, 2016) traced a route for research regarding religion in the urban space by taking into account spaces that are not officially considered sacred or daily life spaces that sometimes become religious. These spaces are entrenched with daily religious practices inside the urban context, they are utopian religious spaces instead of officially delimited spaces. Sacred spaces, hence, are also spaces that can support socialisation and emotional attachment. Spaces can become sacred because of the performance of religious practices: these spaces are called extrinsic religious spaces because the religious feature is not intrinsic (Kong, 2016).

The practices of secularism - that are performed in relation to the definition of what spaces are religious by the state and the subdivision of spaces between public and private ones – are usually intended as practices aimed at regulating the presence of worship places. Thus, it is problematic, for instance, to define places that are not intended as worship places, but that follow religious practices outside worshipping (Berg, 2019). Besides, the presence of unofficial sacred space is sometimes part of an attempt to resist specific policies aimed at limiting a specific religious group or practices (Heng, 2019).

The way Muslims live everyday spaces and the supposedly secular public domain suggests that they are not neutral spaces or spaces without an ideological characterization (Knott, 2021). Muslims in Western cities can create new diverse spaces thanks to their religious sensitivity, which is seen as a threat for the secular spaces. Islamic spaces can be used in different ways through Islamic normativity: they can be temporary, semi-permanent or permanent spaces (Kuppinger, 2014a). For instance, street kitchens with a clear relation to pious Muslim association in British cities are part of temporary spaces of poverty alleviation in austerity times (Zavos, 2018, 2020).

Gale (2007) suggests that Muslim spaces are usually analysed with two different approaches: the ritual approach, namely spaces are Islamic when they are related to repeated ritual practices; the conflictual approach, namely Islamic spaces are related to conflicts and negotiations caused by the Muslim presence. Nevertheless, for instance, there are also specific networks of spaces and persons linked to religious dietary needs, such as the kosher and halal food sector. These spaces are part of sacred landscapes, namely landscapes that mix "The relativeness of places and the comprehensiveness of landscapes" (Edensor et al., 2020, p. 75). Most of the times, entrepreneurship spaces related to religious dietary needs are part of Islamic sacred landscapes in cities within countries with a non-Muslim majority but they also provide food for non-Muslim people.

Halal: migrant entrepreneurship with some obstacles

Historically, spaces related to religious consumption are located near the mosque, because in the Islamic spaces' ecosystem the mosque is the centre. Lately, in countries with a non-Muslim majority, the mosque still has a prominent role in this ecosystem, but Muslim-related shops are sometimes established in different areas than the mosque's (El Boujjoufi et al., 2021).

Spaces like *halal* butchers and kebab shops are an example of how religious practices can be connected to the urban context outside worship spaces, and they create a kind of proximities-borders that Kong and Woods (2019) describe: even if they were born for specific cultural-religious needs, they are opened to non-migrants and non-religious customers or customers that come from different religious backgrounds. Overall, non-officially sacred spaces can be considered part of a greater religious and cultural territorialisation that maintains cultural

boundaries (Nasser, 2015), but it is also open to customers external to the Islamic umma. Besides, religious spaces beyond the worship spaces contribute to the constitution of a continuously shifting and hybrid identity (Brace et al., 2016).

The *halal* sector in Europe created some cultural (specifically against migrants who are entrepreneurs) and religious (through secular claims) controversies (Ruiz-Bejarano,2017). *Halal* food is mostly meat from animals slaughtered and treated according to Islamic jurisprudence. According to Islamic jurisprudence, the *halal* meat has three different features: the spiritual feature, in other words, killing the animal while asking the permission from the Creator; the well-being and welfare of the animal, namely, the animal must be treated well and fairly in order to obtain *halal* meat; the final product must be a high-quality one. While considering these features as the basis of the *halal* sector's establishment, it is a global market worth billions of dollars, and it has its parallel supply chain and certification of conformity systems (Iner,2021). Within the urban context in countries with a non-Muslim majority, this sector created many businesses, namely *halal* butchers, kebab shops, and restaurants that sell *halal* food. These businesses are part of an Islam that creates and encourage leisure based on pious and moral values (Harb Deeb, 2013), and this happens both in Muslim and non-Muslim countries. *Halal* shops are part of a recent trend of urban consumption and leisure in European cities. Kebab shops' customers are usually also non-religious persons. For instance, Italian inhabitants perceive kebab shops in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods in Milan as both a presence that ruin the authenticity of neighbourhoods and spaces open to a transversal typology of customers, including Italians (Marzorati, 2010). The presence of kebab shops is not always welcomed as completely unfavourable, but it is part of a new branding-marketisation of cities. Nevertheless, from a policy and planning perspective, for instance, in Lombardia, the so-called Harlem law (Lombardia regional law February 27th 2012 n. 3) limited the opening of new shops with ethnic features. Thus, a revanchist view of the city (Amon, 2015) and how to deal with the arrival of migrant entrepreneurship is, in this case, reflected within businesses

urban planning policies. Furthermore, this urban revanchism goes hand in hand with fundamentalist political campaigns regarding the cultural authenticity of Italian food against kebab and couscous (Fanpage, 2015).

Furthermore, a new kind of entrepreneurial religion globally constitutes an actor within neoliberal urbanism and affirms itself by assemblage techniques (Lanz & Oosterbaan, 2016). According to Michalopoulos, Naghavi, and Prarolo (2012), historically, spaces related to inequality in the proximity of trade routes were a constitutive element of Islamic civilisation and its expansion. Merchants and people related to trade routes were people willing to convert to Islam. Nowadays, the main places related to these routes have a stable presence of Muslim communities. Thus, entrepreneurialism and trade are essential elements in establishing Muslim communities worldwide (Naghavi, 2019), and, regarding migrants from an overall perspective, self-employment and entrepreneurship are mostly a way to survive to the inaccessibility of the public sector and without jobs which require citizenship. Considering urban spaces, all the places related to Islam - including the commercial-retail ones – are not a symbol of the Islamic presence, but they are a material manifestation of religious piousness (Benussi, 2020). This manifestation of the sacred also occurs in the relations established between the spaces that are considered sacred, and with other spaces in the city.

A relational standpoint to overcome dualism

Religion is a liminal terrain when it comes to migration and multicultural contexts: religion can be both exclusive and inclusive. Religion can unite different cultures – including migrants and non-migrants - and create a sense of identity that divides. In other words, from a more conceptual and spatial standpoint, religion through spatial (and a-spatial) proximity can create borders and border identities (Kong & Woods, 2019). Nevertheless, it is not enough to investigate religious spaces through physical or cultural proximity, but they can be analysed

under relationality lenses that add power relations to the general frame (Allen, 2009). According to Pierce (2011) all spaces are relational. Thus, despite their differences there are no places unrelated to others. Furthermore, the making of places through relations between people, materials, institutions, situated practices, and processes makes them multi-faceted and multi-scalar (McCann & Ward, 2010b; Pierce et al., 2011). Relationality does not flatten the differences among places but contributes to their evolution.

Astor-Aguilera and Graham Harvey suggested a relational perspective regarding religion that concerns otherness: "In contrast to force-fitting the "other" into our academic logics […] the world of "others" is often a world not composed by and for humans but one in which humans are part of a larger relational community where a multitude of agents, seen and unseen, interact" (Astor-Aguilera & Harvey, 2020, p. 3).

Religion establishes itself through relations between subjects in relation to an environment (Krech, 2019). Hence, religion can be investigated under the lenses of relationality. The identity of places evolves as time passes by, and thanks to the relationality between them, both from a local and global perspective, this fact constitutes a global sense of place (Massey, 1999, 2004). The global and local forces that change the identity of places can cause conflicts. Thus, the identity of places is, according to Massey, inherently a potential producer of conflicts. A global sense of place, in other words, is to find the character of a place by linking-relating it to other places, while taking into account the conflicting interpretations of that place (Massey, 1991). Places do not have a static identity but it evolves, and it has a different interpretation depending on the person or entity which interprets it (Edensor et al., 2020, Chapter 2).

In the Muslim spaces' case, Muslim communities, like many migrants' communities, can be identified as place-makers or relational agents within urban spaces in Europe. These communities act through the logic of locality, namely by taking into account both relations inside the urban environment and global connections beyond the urban context (Sunier,

2020). For instance, Muslim communities can sometimes intertwine the place-making of pious Muslim spaces with antiracism and urban cultures such as hip-hop (Abdul Khabeer, 2018).

"Understanding the geographies of religion as relational place-frames avoids unhelpful binaries: the private and religious spaces, practices, and representations on the one hand and public and secular ones on the other" (O'Mahony, 2019, p. 22). Through relationality, the relations between state and religions could be analysed, especially when limitations towards building and allowing the presence of worship places such as mosques are implied (Müller, 2019).

Thus, relationality helps to avoid the contraposition between, on the one hand, secular and religious spaces, and on the other hand, public and private spaces. Furthermore, relationality also helps to avoid analyses based on positivism-realism or constructionist-deconstructionist as the only possible perspectives on religion (Krech, 2019). In other words, relationality gives the possibility to overcome dualism(s) in the study of religious spaces (A. Whitehead, 2020). In the specific case of this article, the contraposition can be individuated between the definition and separation of officially religious and unofficially religious spaces, and commercial and religious spaces. Thus, seeking relationality among spaces and people also related to *halal* meat is a perspective that avoids dualism. Furthermore, Muslim communities' relationality and spaces are also directed towards non-religious spaces, the context of neighbourhoods, and shifts of local spaces over time (Beekers & Tamimi Arab, 2016).

Turin: a Muslim community

Migrants and Muslims in Italy

In Italy, immigration has been present since the post-World War II period but have acquired centrality in the public debate due to increased migration flows only between the 1980s and 1990s (Colucci, 2019). Foreigners are estimated at 5,171,894 residents in Italy (Istat, 2021), which is 8,7% of the entire Italian population (*Cittadini Stranieri in Italia - 2021*, n.d.).

Xenophobic policies at the local and state levels found a sort of counterbalance in the commitment to helping by civil society (Ambrosini, 2012, 2020), namely by NGOs, and associations. In the last ten years, part of the public and government's discourse was aimed at limiting – and in some cases criminalising – NGOs and associations involved with aid for migrants. The most recent laws regarding migration flows are related to a xenophobic containment about the so-called migration 'crisis' (Dennison & Geddes, 2021). Xenophobic parties' electoral success in Italy and other EU countries is also related to their opposition to the so-called EU burden-sharing functioning, which is supposed to guarantee a subdivision of migrant quotas through symbolic solidarity between EU countries (Basile & Olmastroni, 2020).

Xenophobia is also a key element regarding the lack of a citizenship reform (Bulli, 2018; Tintori, 2018), which would help to improve integration for persons with immigrant background. Despite the growth of citizenship obtained by resident foreigners between 2000 and 2015, since 2016, obtainments have been severely declining. Foreign residents can obtain Italian citizenship after ten years (usually after 15 years because of bureaucratic obstacles), thanks to marriage after two years, or due to transmitted/elective right of citizenship (the so-called ius sanguinis). In 2019 citizenship status was obtained by 45% due to the transmitted

right of citizenship, 13% due to marriage, and 42% due to residence status. Nevertheless, only 2,5% of foreign residents obtained citizenship (Colombo, 2021; Openpolis, 2021).

Another strain of xenophobia in Italy is islamophobia – usually entrenched with racist and antimigrant prejudice - namely an ethnocentric, antireligious, and Western-centric discourse, behaviour, threat perception, and hate crimes against Muslim faith adherents. Islamophobia in Italy is primarily a distorted perception of Muslims in public opinion and discourse backed by the media (Cervi et al., 2021), intellectuals like Fallaci and Sartori (Cousin & Vitale, 2014), and right-wing parties (Caiani & Carvalho, 2021; Cervi, 2020; Testa & Armstrong, 2012). Furthermore, hate violent crimes against Muslims in Italy are sometimes reported as well (Lipori, 2020; OSCE ODIHR, 2022; UNAR, 2022).

In Italy, migrants related to the Islamic faith have been estimated at 1.4 million (Caritas-Migrantes, 2021). The umma is heterogeneous in faith interpretation and the adherents' country of origin (Nuvolati, 2020, Chapter 15). Because of the lack of an official statistics about Muslim adherents, the total sum of Muslims in Italy is not precise. Thus, the total number of Muslims in Italy is calculated based on each foreign country's percentage of members of Islam plus Italian converts, while it is not possible to know who the real practicing Muslims are. Besides, subdivision of adherents is a complex matter. Due to its intrinsic complex nature, Islam in Italy is kaleidoscopic, namely its adherents have different origins: they come from different juridical schools and branches of Islam, multiethnic origins such as Asian, North-African, Sub-Saharan African, Middle Eastern, generations, namely they are migrants or have migrant descent (Mezzetti,2019). Furthermore, there is also a small minority of Shiites, and a minority of Italian converts that must be considered within the Muslim adherents count in Italy.

It is crucial to at least mention the still missing agreement between the Muslim communities and the Italian state. There are many reasons and difficulties, despite attempts to reach it. One of the reasons, for example, is the lack of a single representation of Muslim communities and

the heterogeneity of the associations that should be part of this concordat and also the conflict between the associations and between the sometimes Islamophobic standpoints of state representatives and some more separatist and radical conceptions of Islam (Anello, 2016; Cavana, 2016; Conti, 2013; Menotti, 2013). The consequences of the non-agreement are manifold or, in any case, contribute to aggravating certain situations at the local and national levels, such as the informality of worship spaces.

There is a continuous negotiation by the Muslim communities of the individual cities to obtain religious spaces (with stiff or not manifest opposition to the presence of Islamic religious spaces) and not a general and institutional recognition of Islam. The latter has many problematic consequences on Muslim communities in Italy.

First, Italian Muslim associations sometimes are related to countries with a Muslim majority. National Muslim associations in the last 30 years circa tried to reach recognition by the Italian state more than once through an agreement but this was not possible due to the complexity and heterogeneity of Islam in Italy, and most of the times also due to governments and institutions refusal towards minority religions. The biggest and publicly known Italian Muslim associations are: UCOII, which is supposedly related to Muslim Brotherhood, and which self-declared to have the largest number of members and mosques; Centro islamico culturale d'Italia, which is related to Saudi Arabia; CO.RE.IS, which consists of Italian converts; U.M.I., which it supposed to be the Islamic party of Italy but it does not have a large number of adherents (Macrì, 2007). The lack of an agreement with the Italian state makes difficult the birth of Italian Islam and makes most of the Muslim Italian communities dependent on other countries and inner community support. Even though Islam is the second

religion in Italy it still cannot receive appropriate public recognising and funding guaranteed by the 8 per mille law (Pallavicini, 2010).[1]

Second, the lack of official recognition for Islam in Italy has direct consequences on worship spaces: there are only 6 official mosques with visible signs of their presence within the urban space and recognised by institutions, most of them at the local level. Nevertheless, according to UCOII Muslim worship spaces in Italy are 1.217 (UCOII, 2017) but 1211 worship spaces are not considered officially religious spaces by local and state institutions. The vast majority of Muslim worship spaces in Italy can be considered informal (Chiodelli & Moroni, 2017), thanks also to strategies of avoidance and refusal of Muslim worship spaces by planners and political administrators at the local level (Morpurgo, 2021). Namely, Muslim worship spaces are not visible in urban spaces because of their precarious and unrecognised presence, and Muslim communities are a presence that demands to be recognised at the local and national level. According to Carta (2022) the conflict over mosques should be brought to light through attempts at public discussion between Muslim communities, individual city dwellers, institutions, and local politicians. Although this may lead to a higher level of conflict and exacerbate intolerance towards people of the Muslim faith, such attempts would, if successful, help acceptance of this religion with invisible worship spaces in urban context.

[1] The 8 per mille is a percentage of the personal income tax (IRPEF) that can be assigned to a religious group which reached an agreement with the state. The sums collected through this tax must be used by the religious groups for the purposes defined by law (Italia Non Profit, 2022).

Migrants and Muslims in Turin

Turin and the migrants communities

Turin is an Italian city with a population of circa 900.000 inhabitants. The latest fact makes Turin the fourth largest city in Italy. It is located in the North-Western region of Piedmont, and it is the third economic centre of Italy. Its economy until the beginning of the 80s was based on the FIAT automotive industry, and despite becoming a post-fordist and post-industrial city it is still a city with one the most advanced economies in Italy, thanks to the automotive and service sectors.

Since the 1950s, the city of Turin has experienced internal migration characterised by migratory flows from the South of Italy, then international migratory flows from the last years of the twentieth century (Eve & Ceravolo, 2016).

According to ISTAT (2021), there are 213,042 foreigners resident in Turin. The distribution of foreigners in Turin is higher in circumscription 5 and 6 but it has a tendency towards diffusion in the other circumscriptions.

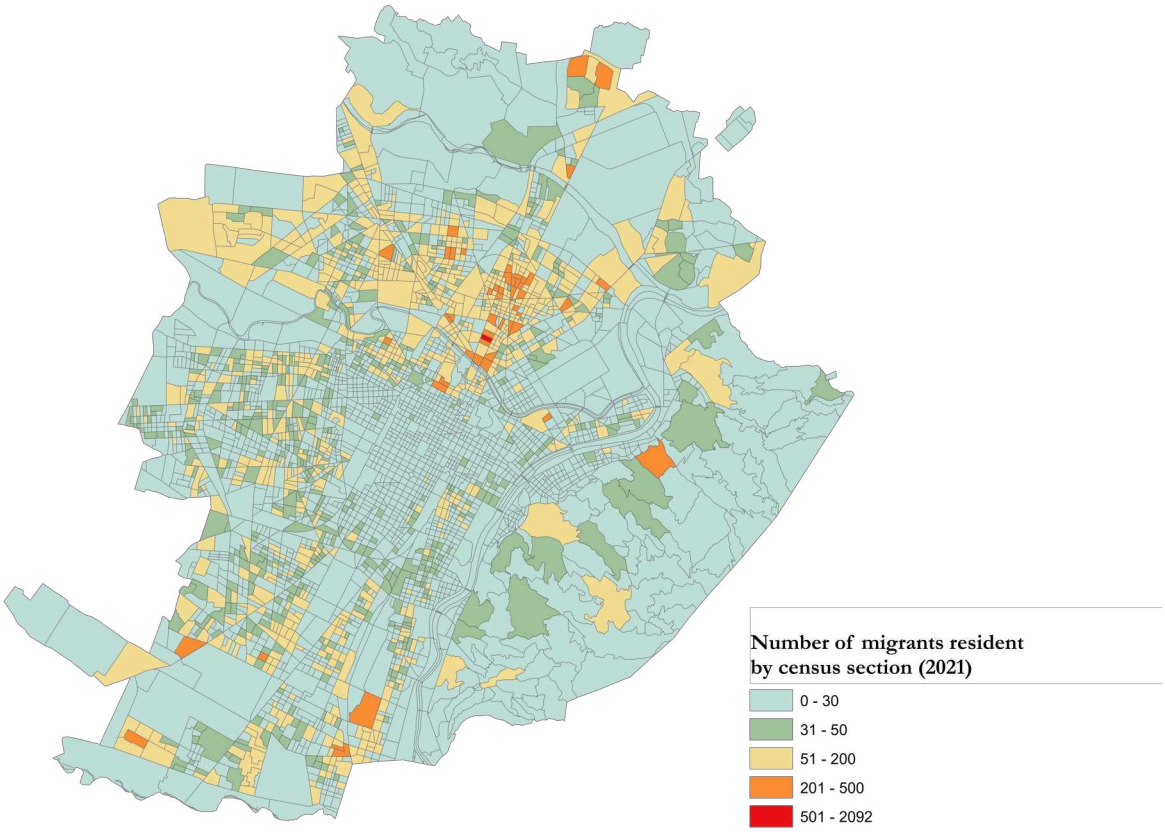

Figure 2 Number of immigrants by census section (Turin City Statistics Office, 2021)

Local integration policies for the migrant population in Turin have been characterised by a focus on interculturality (Mezzetti & Ricucci, 2019a). Considering a procedural perspective on intercultural policies in Turin, a first chronological phase is characterised by a public interest and expenses towards integration, lately a second phase, since 2010s is characterised, thanks to financialisation, by a prominence of private interventions made by non-profit

organisations, bank foundations, and cooperatives. The logic of these policies is linked to neighbourhoods and the problems that can arise in living together within a neighbourhood. For example, neighbourhood houses are garrisons that should ensure greater integration of the foreign population into the urban fabric (Caponio & Donatiello, 2017). Another example of urban space-related intercultural policies is the Intercultural Centre (Città di Torino, 2022), which promotes intercultural events and policies in a specific space in Turin.

With the arrival of migrants since the '90s new cultures, religions, and habits arrived in Turin with them, thus religion is an important part of migrants' experience in Turin, and it has a transnational and local perspective (Pennacini & Gonzalez Diez, 2006). In order to follow a sort of 'reasonable accommodation' of this religious kaleidoscopic presence, first public then private initiatives (thanks to the progressive financialisation of the city) supported an intercultural approach to religion which is mostly related to physical spaces of encounters and events related to religious spaces. The most important intercultural initiative related to interfaith dialogue is the Interfaith Committee (within the Intercultural Centre), which is aimed at representing most of the religions in Turin. This Committee has written a manifesto to regulate the living together of religions in Turin and it usually promotes, creates and supports initiatives and spaces related to a pacific coexistence of religions and cultural diversities (Città di Torino, 2007b, 2007a; Nesci, 2020). However, within Turin's religious superdiversity, place-making and spatial strategies often clash with certain regulatory principles of urban space (Becci et al., 2016). For instance, in 2016 there was an attempt at the municipal level to build a place of dialogue for all religions in Turin by the Interfaith Committee and two foundations (Bossi & Giorda, 2021) but the realisation of the project was blocked by a new municipal government in 2018 (Cupelli, 2018) with avoidance and bureaucratic strategies. With reference to intercultural and interreligious dialogue, once a year in Turin there is a festival called "Torino Spiritualità", which is a festival organized by the "Circolo dei Lettori" foundation. It is important because, as written in its website, it is

related to the city and space: "From the city centre to its suburbs, from urban spaces to the surrounding region: at Torino Spiritualità the spirit of spaces is a subject and an inspiration for research. Theatres, places of worship, libraries, museums, and the hills of Turin: Torino Spiritualità transforms the city and the territory into an open space for reflection" (Fondazione Circolo dei Lettori, 2021). Thus, reflections and debate on spirituality are traced with the starting point of urban spaces like the more general intercultural policies and initiatives.

The Muslim presence in Turin

The Muslim presence in Turin presents some peculiarities. The Muslim population, estimated at around 40,000 people has a higher concentration of people in circumscriptions 6 and 7 but tends to diffusion.

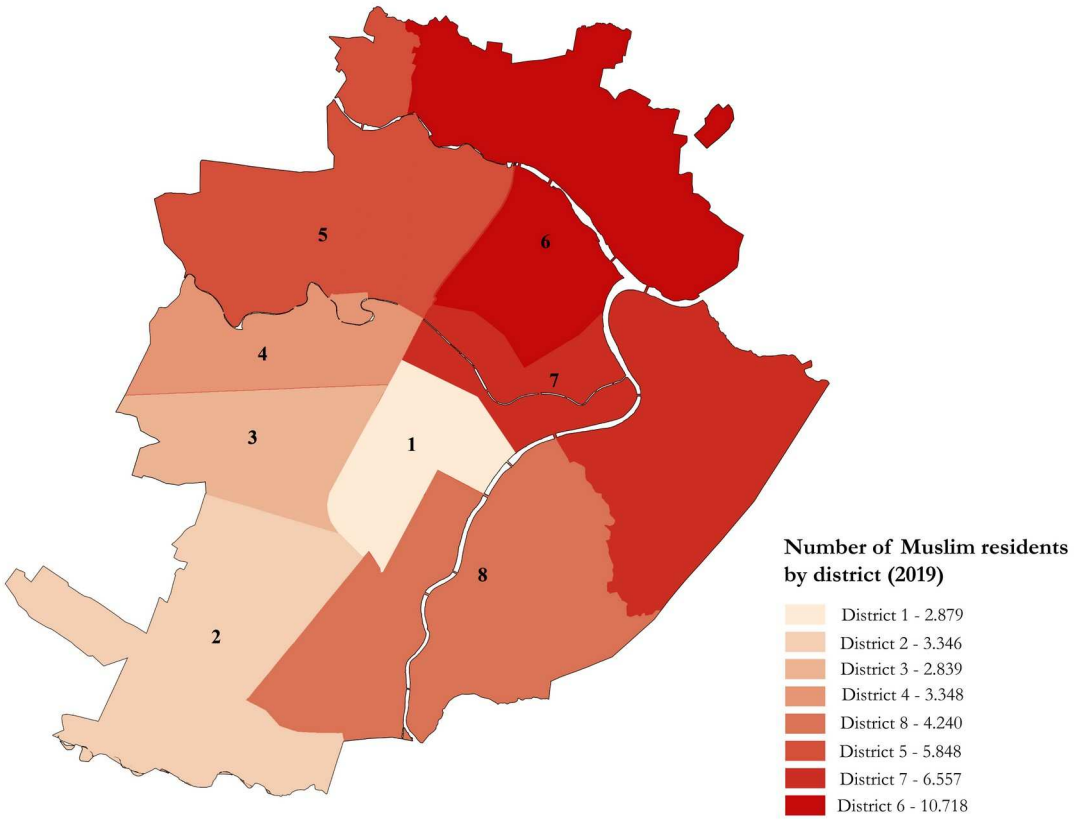

Figure 3 Muslim inhabitants in Turin subdivided by district (Turin City Statistics Office 2019)

As shown by the latest data from the Report on Foreigners 2020 (Città di Torino, 2020), there is a solid Moroccan and Egyptian presence within the Muslim community in Turin. The mosques and Muslim associations in Turin can be divided into three groups: mono-ethnic, namely religious spaces that respond to a logic linked to the origin of a single country (for instance, the Bengali community); inactive multi-ethnic, namely with a multi-ethnic pool of believers, usually small in number, but limited to the purely religious aspect or to providing small amounts of aid to the neighbourhood; active

multi-ethnic, namely with a multi-ethnic pool of believers, usually large in number, who have an active presence in the life of the neighbourhood and city.

The data provided by the Turin City Statistics Office (2020) about the Muslim population in Turin shows that there is one district with the highest Muslim population. However, that same data shows that the Muslim population does have areas of a higher concentration, but it also tends to spread to other areas outside the ones with a higher concentration. Arbaci (2019, p. 164) shows how, taking as an example inhabitants from Morocco and Egypt, the presumably Muslim populations most present in Turin, a greater concentration in district 6 and 7 and the diffusion of the Muslim population were already present in 2002. However, investigating the socio-economic data (Pregliasco, 2021), particularly the income areas of Turin, the neighbourhoods in which this occurs are always low-income neighbourhoods.

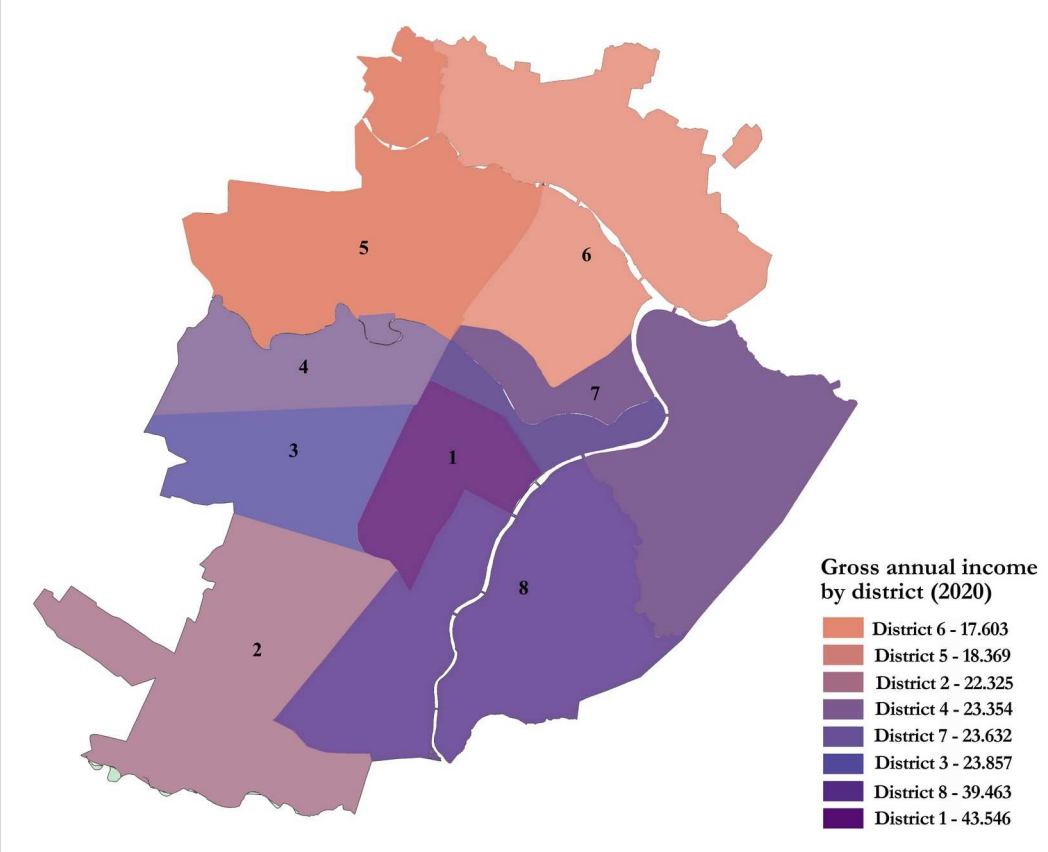

Figure 4 Gross annual income in Turin by district (Ministry of Economy and Finance 2020)

Policies about and by Muslims in Turin

The integration policies of Muslims in the municipality of Turin have always been under the banner of interculturality, with an aspect of active and proactive participation even by the Muslim community itself (Mezzetti & Ricucci, 2019b), especially by the second generations, who propose an Italian Islam and less tied to the countries of origin (Ricucci, 2014).

Moreover, in addition to the presence of the Interfedi Committee, the City of Turin and all the associations and mosques present have drawn up a sharing pact that consists of coordinated actions and constant dialogue between the Islamic community and the City of Turin (Morucci, 2018).

Furthermore, in Turin, there is a sensibility towards diverse food diets in school, namely the municipality supports and allow the choice also for religious menus such as menus that consists of *halal* food (Giorda, 2014, pp. 35–40).

Actively supported and original initiatives of Muslim communities in Turin are always related to an urban and neighbourhood perspective, a spatial standpoint of openness towards citizens including non-Muslim and Italian ones. For instance, the Moschee Aperte (open mosques) initiative is aimed at opening Muslim worship spaces for citizens that want to know more about Islam and the Turin's *umma*. Moschee Aperte consists of debates, artistic exhibition and conviviality between Muslims and non-Muslims, especially the sharing of *iftar*, the moment of the end of Ramadan fastening (Città di Torino, 2017). Another example of a Muslim project within the urban context is Yalla Aurora!, which is a regeneration project inside a bigger public tender related to the perception of security in the urban context and based on a securitarian discourse (Tonite, 2021). It

> aims to redevelop and transform an abandoned premises in Via Chivasso into a multifunctional space, a place for socialising, studying, training and promoting youth leadership, run by young people, and at the same time a reference point for the entire neighbourhood community (Islam Torino, 2021).

This redevelopment is not only the one of a building but an active intervention in the neighbourhood with a series of initiatives aimed at improve, and metaphorically and physically cleaning the spaces of the neighbourhood (Yalla Aurora, 2022). Yalla Aurora project can be considered an act of place-making of the Muslim second-generation community in Turin, a sort of securitization from below.

Observation and listening to as method

This study is based on three operations: maps, photographs and interviews.

The maps, shown in the case study and results sections were used to identify the location of Muslim spaces and understand where the Muslim population is in Turin. The data used to identify Muslim spaces came from various sources, most of them web based. Islamtorino.it in the section dedicated to worship spaces is the source used to identify where worship spaces are located in Turin (centri islamici). The search engine to find businesses localisation and names in registroimprese.it was the source used to identify where *halal* butcher shops and kebab shops are located in Turin (Registro Imprese, 2022). This aspect of top-down analysis and localisation must be related to a general critique of cartography, whose use is by no means neutral. This is especially the case when a religious minority such as the Muslims is the subject of research, since they are a minority under observation, especially in Western countries. In short, cartography helps to understand some geographical aspects, but it is necessary to understand its limits and criticalities, especially when it comes to locating a minority and carrying out research focused on it. Consequently, it is also necessary to understand the situation of Muslim spaces from a frontal and direct point of view. To understand the more direct aspect and get the Muslim community to talk, it was necessary to make two operations: shooting photos and interviewing persons from the Muslim community in Turin.

Photographs provided a great starting point and further confirmed the proximity of the spaces of the Muslim community in Turin. 63 photos were taken of Muslim spaces both indoors and outdoors. Photos were also taken in some of the streets where these spaces are located. The starting point to individuate places to start shooting photos were maps, which provided a precise localisation of Muslim spaces in Turin. Besides, every time an interview took place

within or near the chosen spaces, an authorization to shoot photos was asked the owners or people responsible for the space. Other spaces, where interviews did not take place, were reached through google street view. In one case an interviewee took photos in his mosque and business, this allowed to have an additional point of view on how the subjects of research perceive their spaces.

As for conducting interviews, that gives a voice to the people who live in Muslim spaces, an imam was the first informant and he helped to know more about the Muslim community perspective. First, the main reason why interviews were conducted is the need to know what persons that own and use Muslim spaces in Turin think about them from their point of view. Second, it was necessary to know if there are relations between those Muslim spaces beyond mere spatial proximity. Third, investigating these relations implies discovering whether those spaces are secularised. Fourth, these relations happen in an urban context; thus, the possibility that these relations and people who use those spaces produce an agency and have an active role in the urban context was a fact to be considered. 17 interviews were conducted with male people belonging to Muslim spaces: simple worshippers, imams, representatives of cultural associations, people who run halal butcher shops, people who run kebab shops, were interviewed. Due to personal constraints and difficulties in finding them, it was not possible to interview those who deal with ritual slaughter and logistics. People were reached through the snowball technique or by searching on the duckduckgo search engine according to the type of space (for instance, ‘halal butcher shop’ to find telephone contacts of Islamic butchers) or by physically going to the places to ask for a contact. The interviews took place online or in one of the researched spaces or on the street or at home. Each interview was conducted in Italian. The most important interviews, with a total duration between 6 minutes circa and 80 minutes circa were transcribed, interviews with a duration of less than 6 minutes or very brief conversations (considered interviews as well) were not transcribed. Interviews were conducted in the period between June 2021 and January 2022.

Secularisation through relationality?

Concentration and visibility

When walking, for instance, along Corso Giulio Cesare, a 5,2 km long important road that is located within the multicultural boroughs of Aurora and Barriera (which have the greatest concentration of Muslim spaces) the presence of halal butchers and kebab shops in the urban space is very strong, it is quite norm to find them.

Figure 5 A halal butcher's shop entrance

This visibility is due to two needs: on the one hand, the retail of specific products; on the other hand, the need to signal their presence to customers from their religious and ethnic community. Usually, butchers' and kebab shops signs bear one inscription in Italian and one in Arabic. When it was possible, some shops set out fruit stalls or tables offering a meeting point outside for customers who wanted to stop for tea or for those who wanted to eat meat. Sometimes it is possible to hear a radio playing Islamic prayers coming from Islamic butchers. Butchers and kebab shops, despite their visibility, seem only interested in selling specific halal products, being aware of their religious value. Ghaazi (Interview 11/07/2021,

2021a), a young butcher, laughingly says, “Well, if I stop selling, people do not buy this product in the area anymore. Our difference from ordinary butcher shops is how the meat is slaughtered". However, not everything related to halal products is always bought by religious people. Driss (Interview 28/01/2022, 2022), the manager of two kebab shops and one of the first to open a kebab shop in Turin, told me that his clientele was 90% Italian from the beginning. So would this be tantamount to saying that kebab shops are wholly detached from the religious aspect and do not contemplate their space as religious? "During the pandemic, X, a well-known kebab shop in Turin," says Mustafa (Interview 11/07/2021, 2021b), an imam, "undertook aid initiatives together with our mosque, for instance it supplied food to us, and we distributed it in the neighbourhood”. Driss (Interview 28/01/2022, 2022) says that despite the clientele, the religiosity of a kebab shop “lies in the heart of those who have a business that sells halal meat, who cares about the fact that it is Italian meat and therefore of quality, but also that it conforms to the ritual slaughter”. Investigating the matter further, Driss cares so much about both aspects that he takes the meat directly from those who do the actual slaughtering, which has changed over time. "In the beginning, we had an agreement with a butcher shop, then from 2013 we went directly to the people who do the slaughtering" (Interview 28/01/2022, 2022), so despite a majority of Italian customers, he cares about the religious authenticity of his kebab product. The latter seems to be part of his religious interpretation of his business space.

Mosques are characterised as hidden and anonymous places within the streets and neighbourhoods of the city. It is almost always impossible to understand whether there is a mosque within a street, their presence is not characterised by signs of their presence as may be the case for other places of worship. “We are one community” says Samir, the imam of a mosque, “Without our presence as mosques, there would have been a security problem, because we actively collaborate with the municipality and security forces regarding people who radicalised and possible crimes committed within our community” (Interview 3/07/2021,

2021). This invisible presence is due to the non-recognition of Islamic places of worship by the Italian State or could be a symbolic consequence of the non-recognition of people of the Muslim faith as a political subject and participant in public life (Amiraux, 2016). Consequently, the mosques in Turin (and Italy) are located within condominium spaces, they are not located within specific places of worship.

A visible presence often does not correspond to an agency within the neighbourhood. Paradoxically, the invisibility of Muslim prayer spaces implies their relational agency within the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, every year an initiative of the Muslim community for Turin citizens makes Muslim worship spaces less invisible. “The open mosques initiative has led many people who do not know Islam or who are prejudiced against us to change their minds; like that lady who thought that the presence of the mosque had lowered the value of her house but she changed her mind when she visited the mosque and got to know us directly” Wahid (Interview 22/06/2021, 2021), a representative of a prominent mosque, recounts. Often these prayer spaces actively manifest themselves by also assigning themselves a function of control and relation towards the spaces adjacent to the mosque and the neighbourhood. “We have made a collection of signatures against drug dealing and have asked the municipality to solve this problem which is right in front of our mosque” (Interview 11/07/2021, 2021b) Mustafa claims. Apart from Mustafa, almost all the religious leaders complained of drug dealing in the neighbourhoods where the mosques are located. Another leader, Bachir (Interview 21/06/2021, 2021a) told me that “Having won a redevelopment tender concerning the safety of our neighbourhood, we are taking an active part in modifying our spaces and beautifying the spaces near the mosque and the neighbourhood, which shows a certain degradation due to the presence of crime and people who spoil the decorum of the neighbourhood”.

Figure 6 A mosque entrance inside an inner courtyard within a building

Proximity from above = proximity from below?

There are three areas where there is a greater concentration of butchers' and kebab shops (clustering) and where this clustering phenomenon occurs, there is also a proximity to the religious spaces of the Muslim community. Even though kebab shops are diffused everywhere in the city, the clustering phenomenon mainly occurs in three areas-boroughs called Barriera di Milano, Aurora, and San Salvario, which are also boroughs with a high number of Muslim

inhabitants. Furthermore, most of the spaces are located in the 3 districts with the highest Muslim population. It may be noticed that sometimes religious businesses and religious spaces are located in areas without clustering. This view from above, thus, made possible to see the current situation and collocation of the Muslim spaces in the city of Turin, a view that had to be confirmed through further observation and listening to the Muslim community.

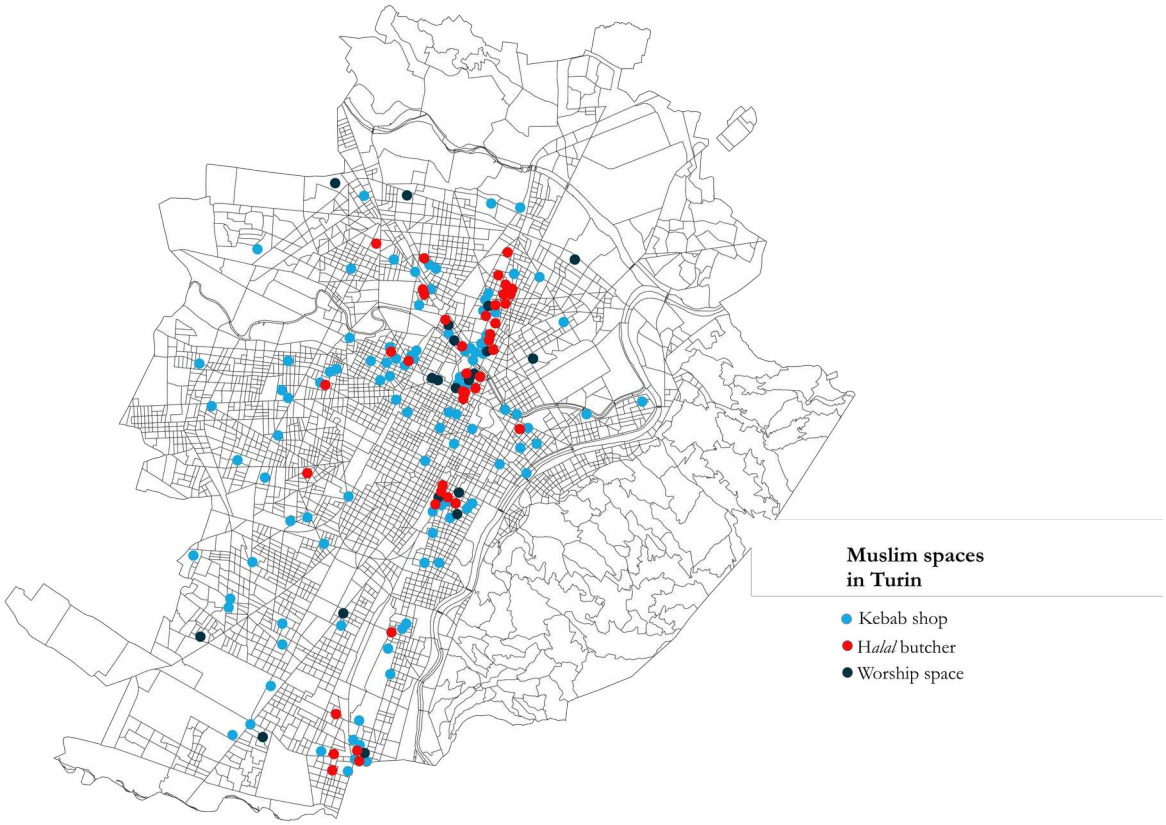

Figure 7 Halal butcher's shops, kebab shops and worship spaces location in Turin

An example of visual spatial proximity between two Islamic spaces is shown below, where a kebab shop is located next to a halal butcher shop. Visible proximity between two Islamic spaces is not always synonymous with their direct relationship. For example, when asking more than one president of Muslim associations that run mosques, no contacts of nearby butcher shops or kebab shops were received.

“The proximity is like the one between the doctor and pharmacy” says Walid (Interview 21/06/2021, 2021b), a practising Shiite Muslim.

“It is probably people who do not even go to mosques; so, we can say that the relationship between mosques and butchers' shops has become progressively secularized” says Bachir (Interview 21/06/2021, 2021a). So, as some of the people interviewed made clear to me, there has been a historical evolution in the proximity between mosques, butchers' and kebab shops. First of all, B. said that the first butcher shops, those opened in the early 1990s, were run by the same people who ran the mosques, so there was a relationship of overlapping between retail and religion, not only spatial proximity. Over time, this relationship has weakened, the butchers are now secularised compared to the 1990s, and the historical butchers are the ones with the most significant turnover, so much so that they also have customers from outside Turin. According to Bachir (Interview 21/06/2021, 2021a), when new butcher shops open, it is hardly the proximity to a religious space that is taken into account, but a consumption need for the inhabitants of an area. For example, a butcher's shop recently opened near one of the two mosques for business reasons. Moreover, he argues that the new butcher shops should be sought in the suburbs of Turin, especially in the areas near the council houses (there are no butchers in the centre).

Samir (Interview 3/07/2021, 2021) remembers that the first *halal* butcher shop in Turin was the mosque itself. In other words, the retail of halal meat took place on the premises where prayer took place, so the relationship between the religious place and the place of retail was at

its most historic peak in the early moments of the Muslim community in Turin. He denies that there is any relationship at present between his mosque and any halal butcher. Driss (Interview 28/01/2022, 2022) was the first one, in 2003, to open a kebab shop in Turin and during the first years of activity he went to buy *halal* meat in a *halal* butcher shop. However, when the number of customers raised he started to buy *halal* meat directly from a slaughterhouse. In this case there was and is no official contact or relation between worship spaces and his kebab shops, because, even though they come from the same *halal* point of view, his shops are related to a business logic. Furthermore, kebab shops can be considered part of an urban fast food culture within the phenomenon of globalization.

Despite the progressive distancing between butchers, kebab shops and mosques, at the moment, some of the old links remain, which is much more rarely the case (this means that there is a change in the sector that has not yet fully taken place or that there are multiple ways in which mosques, kebab shops and halal butchers relate or do not relate). Bachir (Interview 21/06/2021, 2021a) tells about what they did with a butcher shop during the pandemic "We organised a ticket system with a halal butcher shop for the neediest families during the covid". Wahid (Interview 22/06/2021, 2021), a political representative of a mosque, also told me about some support provided by *halal* butchers "many butchers help raise funds to buy new carpets for the Islamic centre. They raise funds to help the Islamic centre to make iftar (meal eaten after sunset in the month of *ramadan*) for those who do not have a home in the month of *ramadan*". Mustafa (Interview 11/07/2021, 2021b) said that during the pandemic, a very well-known kebab shop in Turin distributed its products for free for people who were in need. This kind of support, however, does not go beyond support to the social and voluntary activities of the Islamic community of Turin, so much so that, as claimed by Bachir (Interview 21/06/2021, 2021a) even sometimes the organisations linked to the religious space do not have any kind of link, neither spatial nor of any kind, with the halal butchers and kebab shops. Driss (Interview 28/01/2022, 2022), indeed, when he was asked about relations between his

kebab shops and mosques said that there is "No help, only faith", thus claiming there is no material relation between his shops and mosques, but only the same religious matrix related to faith.

On the other hand, from the point of view of more economical and technical proximity and relationality between mosques, kebab shops and *halal* butchers, "unlike what happens in France", Bachir (Interview 21/06/2021, 2021a) stresses, "where some mosques legitimise and control the validity of the *halal* meat and certificate it. There, there is an established modality, somehow more guaranteed". Even regarding this legitimisation in Turin, there are rare cases where it happens. For example, Marwan (Interview 09/07/2021, 2021), a butcher, showed me a certificate issued by a mosque authorising him to sell *halal* meat. "In fact", says Wahid (Interview 22/06/2021, 2021), "Sometimes some *halal* butchers would like official legitimisation to operate, but it would mean that we would benefit one butcher and discriminate against others. This happens because of the lack of an effective technical system, therefore an organised official legitimisation beyond cultural, spatial proximity and isolated initiatives. The common thread that links the commercial world and our association could be ethics: *halal* in concrete terms means ethics towards the animal and the entire supply chain, up to the consumer. What is missing in Italy is the technical aspect: ethics is there, but how to manage it from the point of view of the actual certification of all the processes to be able to say: 'That is *halal*'".

Discussion

The Turin case study produced results concerning the Turin Muslim community and its spaces. The Muslim community of Turin, like the other Italian Muslim communities and like Islam in general, is very heterogeneous within itself. However, from what has been said by

some representatives of the Muslim community of Turin, the community is going in a peculiar direction, based on relational place-making between spaces. Firstly, on the part of some of the most active associations, there is activity outside of religious spaces, towards adjacent spaces and institutions. Thus, there is the willingness to act in the political life of the neighbourhoods of Turin, but also to act in a relational way to change the spaces. Secondly, it is difficult to give a complete picture with an unambiguous explanation of Muslim spaces in Turin because they are affected by the space-time change and compression and global sense of place (Massey, 1991, 1999, 2004). That is, if the relations between Muslim prayer spaces and non-worship spaces are put at the centre of the argument, it can be realised how, with the increase of the Muslim population, these relations have profoundly changed over time. At first, from the accounts of some witnesses, the spaces were overlapping, namely, the sale of halal meat (when kebab shops did not even exist yet) also took place within the same mosque, and the first people to run the halal butcher shops were the same as those who ran the mosques. Then, over time, this strong link faded. The kebab shops arrived when this link had already thinned and responded more to purely commercial logic.

Moreover, these relations are moving towards progressive secularisation. In other words, as these relations change over time because other needs have arisen, spaces that are not officially considered religious, such as *halal* butcher shops and kebab shops, are becoming increasingly detached from worship spaces, although they all share the same religious matrix. This spatiotemporal evolution has given rise to a conflicting interpretation of these spaces. For instance, kebab shops are undoubtedly not interpreted in the same way by an Italian Catholic or atheist customer and by owners who may have a personal religious sensibility that has led him to sell *halal* meat. The sense of place-making or global sense of place lies in this differentiation on the value and interpretation of the space according to one's religious or another sensibility. This last fact is also confirmed by the shift over time of spaces and their meaning, they effectively become places with a significance and emotional value, in this case

for the Muslim community with the passing of time and the increase of the Muslim population in Turin. These spaces are entrenched with a diverse sensitivity to space, based on the Muslim orthopraxis, despite the heterogeneous nature of Islam. Thus, what makes a worship spaces, kebab shops, and a *halal* butcher's shops similar or located within the same field is the emotional attachment (Kong, 2016) of the Muslim community to these spaces and orthopraxy, despite the invisibility of the worship spaces and the progressive secularisation of butcher's and kebab shops. This last fact can be deduced from the sense of ethnic and religious affiliation, even if it did not emerge explicitly and clearly. However, there was a clear self-awareness on the part of those interviewed of their role as individuals and as a community within and outside the spaces. That is, they are people aware of their Islamic-halal presence and the emotional importance of their spaces for the community.

The case study results lead to some reflections on the more general theoretical part and interpretation outlined in this study. The results of this study lead to a suggestion to revise the concept of secularism starting from its definition and spaces that should be regulated by it. Firstly, due to the scarcity of studies about secularism in the urban context, the attempt of this study was to involve an urban-scale secularism based on spaces-places (Martínez-Ariño, 2021; O'Mahony, 2019) instead of a state sponsored secularism (Enayat, 2017), which theoretically concerns only a state-territorialisation and not urban and local variations. In both cases, the critical secularism school of thought (Asad, 1993, 2003; Enayat, 2017; Mahmood, 2006) still provides tools to investigate the political doctrine of secularism, and it is a reference point for this study. Critical secularism is conceptually a point of departure. Furthermore, the definition of what is officially sacred and what is not (Berg, 2019), which is one of the main features of secularism (both from a general and urban spaces point of view), is not a practical standpoint to analyse this specific case, and the Muslim spaces from an overall perspective. Thus, to overcome the dualism produced by the officially/unofficially sacred spaces distinction (Heng, 2019), these spaces must be investigated through the lenses

of relations between them (Astor-Aguilera & Harvey, 2020; Beekers & Tamimi Arab, 2016; Krech, 2019; Sunier, 2020; A. Whitehead, 2020) while also taking into account the people who use these spaces in various ways.

Secondly, secularism in urban spaces is often a conflictual terrain when related to the Muslim spaces as theorized by Gale (2007). Conflict over Muslim spaces, especially over mosques, (Kuppinger, 2014a) was not the main theme of this research. Nevertheless, it must be underlined the fact that mosques are invisible thanks to the asymmetric conflict based on refusal and avoidance strategies conducted at the local level (Morpurgo, 2021). An indirect strategy adopted by the Muslim community and spaces against this conflict is a soft securitarian narrative which was shared by some interviewee: some of them complained about drug-dealing, shrinking urban decorum, and criminality around Muslim spaces. Furthermore, the adaptation of this narrative to an almost revanchist narrative of the city is perhaps also part of an urban secularisation that sees Turin's Muslim community engaged not only as an internal security guard within the community but as an active part of urban life. It is, in short, a community that demands full recognition of its existence and does so by implementing strategies that aim at this recognition.

In its conceptualisation, secularism implies a relationship between state institutions and religion (Berg, 2019) in which the former has more robust decision-making and regulatory power than the latter. Therefore, according to the classical definition, but also according to a critical one, secularism regulates spaces by imposing a limitation on them based on a regulation that defines as non-religious space everything that is not a place of worship or a place with a precise religious function (Chen, 2016; Heng, 2019; Kong, 2016). Secularism within the urban space creates a dualism between public and private, religious and profane (Martínez-Ariño, 2021), but the Italian case of non-official religious spaces makes the definition and functioning of secularism in the urban spaces problematic. Indeed, the Italian case study suggests that Muslim worship spaces are informal or not officially recognised, thus

it is difficult to insert them in the public or private field. Other spaces not recognised as officially sacred due to different reasons are the commercial ones such as kebab and butchers' shops, which are important for the Muslim population as well because they are part of its diverse sensitivity within the urban space. As we discovered in the theoretical and empirical part, retail of products with a religious value are an important feature of Muslim communities' establishment in the urban context, spatially and historically. Hence, spaces that are not officially sacred or are interpreted by some people as sacred make the regulation implemented by secularism problematic because, according to this interpretation, the power of the state or institution to define the sacredness of spaces is also lost. Thus, who or what defines secularism? In this non-officiality context, it is difficult to perceive the presence of a secularising sovereign state, but it is not difficult to report about a secularism that happens by overcoming state/religion dualism and shifting the focus towards relationality between spaces. The latter must be conceived as the relation between Muslim spaces, and between Muslim spaces and the city.

Conclusion

This study investigates Muslim spaces in Turin, namely worship spaces, halal butchers' and kebab shops. These spaces are analysed through the lenses of the secularisation of spaces and relationality while considering the urban context where they are located. The results of this study indicate that the secularisation of some spaces happened within the evolution of relations between these spaces, and not because of state or local intervention, while also considering the evolution of urban economic and political processes, and changes at local and global level. Besides, the sacredness of a space depends on the emotional/personal value given by space users and must be inferred within the context of the relationality between people and places associated with the Muslim faith. In other words, going beyond the

perception of the material and tangible by perceiving the emotional value given to those places by the people who enjoy them, hence what is invisible within the visible.

Does it make sense at this point to talk about secularisation if the asymmetrical power relationship between the state or local institutions and religion is lost or becomes less visible? The results of this study lead to the definition of secularisation from below. This secularisation does not occur univocally, not all spaces that are not officially religious move towards this secularisation. However, these spaces move towards this type of secularisation by following the evolution of relations with other Muslim religious spaces and not by following a regulation imposed at the state or local level. These relations can be inserted within a global sense of place that is the result of a space-time compression. The progressive secularisation of these unofficial religious spaces, in addition to being the result of the evolution over time of relations with official religious spaces, has a relative interpretative nature, that is, those who use these spaces can interpret them as religious or differently.

The attempt made with this study is to open new possibilities in the studies of religious spaces related to urban contexts by taking into account the presence of secularization by relationality. The long-time debate on secularism and secular spaces does not take into account the relativity of religion and sacredness, in other words the kaleidoscopic point of view on unofficially sacred spaces is important to understand the functioning and significance of these spaces inside the urban context. They are not isolated spaces, but they become places with a meaning or a constant shifting meaning thanks to their relationship between each other and the city.

Future directions for research into this field were partly indicated by Carta (2022), whose study tried to overcome literature on conflict over Muslim spaces by making political and religious actors interacting in a context of thrown*together*ness, thus, by revealing the postsecular starting from a critical secular point of view.

Another more general direction about how to investigate this kind of spaces in the urban context is given by Simone (2022):

> These are spaces of intensive contiguiity of the disparate—disparate forms, functions, and ways of doing things. Such spaces are replete with gaps, interstices, breakdowns, contested territories, and sediments of dissonant tenure regimes, financing, legalities, and use […]. They proliferate across all kinds of urban geographies. As such, the consideration of these disparate forms is not just a matter of space but one of time, of things coming and going, appearing and disappearing and reappearing again, dependent on the practices through which they are engaged (A. Simone, 2022, p. 4).

From a general point of view more research must be conducted on these spaces, while taking into account diverse standpoints, usage and urban geographies.

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