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**Working Paper**

## The Diversity of Diversity: Implications of the Form and Process of Localised Urban Systems

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**The Diversity of Diversity:  
Implications of the Form and  
Process of Localised Urban Systems**

Sandra Wallman  
NOTA DI LAVORO 76.2003

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KNOW – Knowledge, Technology, Human Capital

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# **The Diversity of Diversity: Implications of the Form and Process of Localised Urban Systems**

## **Summary**

This paper summarises research into localised urban systems which accounts for variations in styles of diversity within multi-cultural cities. New work builds on previous studies in London and Turin. The first produced an ideal type model of open:closed urban systems and evidence that the former have better capacity to incorporate incomers. The second revealed the need to adapt the model to account also for the process of diversity. This third phase combines ethnography with computer simulations to reveal emergent properties as well as present styles of urban systems, and to rank the variables driving change. The outcome will be a typology for users dealing with migrant settlement and urban regeneration.

**Keywords:** Typology of urban systems, Diversity, Relatedness, Process models, Ideal types

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## *THE DIVERSITY OF DIVERSITY - towards a typology of urban systems.*

### *Preamble*<sup>1</sup>

- 700,000 people migrate legally into the European Union every year.
- Officials estimate that 500,000 more enter the area illegally each year.
- Without immigration, by the year 2050 the ratio of pensioners to workers would increase from 1.81:1, to 6.97:1 – i.e. from 2 to 7 pensioners per worker.

### *Summary*

- Urban areas have different capacity to incorporate incomers or deal with diversity. Whether migrants seek work or asylum, whether they place themselves or are officially placed, and largely regardless of cultural profiles, they find certain parts of any large city more adaptable and more amenable to their presence than others. The variation is important for policy and for personal choice. Politicians, the media and ordinary people grapple with the same contradictions, even if not with the same agenda. “Fortress Europe”, for its purposes, needs to keep migrants out; demographic Europe, for other reasons, desperately needs to bring them in.
- These national/global and personal/strategic concerns combine, in each local arena, in the characteristic local style.<sup>2</sup> The form of migration is structured by local context.<sup>3</sup> So is the force of it; constraints on and opportunities for communication among migrant groups and between migrants and hosts vary from one area to another, even within a single city.
- A succession of field studies in different cities and parts of cities has indicated a systematic logic which broadly accounts for these better or worse outcomes. As local systems, some areas are relatively more open and more heterogeneous than others. These are routinely more adaptable in the face of change or incursion, with more fluid, more “open” inter-cultural communication.
- The open/closed character of each system is consistent throughout the system and resistant through time. A simple ideal type model of this open/closed contrast is useful as a first level classification: it makes the acceptance/rejection of outsiders intelligible, and confirms that local problems cannot be cured by blanket solutions.
- But the model in its present form has limited application. It takes comparative, multi-layered study over many months to place a given area on the open: closed

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<sup>1</sup> Source: *The Independent*, April 25, 2002

<sup>2</sup> Wallman, 2001 Global Threats etc

<sup>3</sup> Wallman, 1998 Migration experience

continuum, still longer to analyse its specific emergent properties. The procedure takes too long and the data are too complex for practical policy or urban planning.

- The justification for this next phase of work is the need to classify faster, and to convey the implications for intervention more directly. The goal is a practitioner - friendly typology of localised urban systems. Two obstacles stand in its way: How to achieve polythetic classification of urban areas without long and detailed fieldwork? How to convey complexity without simplifying it out of existence ?
- These questions imply parallel research aims. One is to identify indicators of diversity, or style of diversity, that might be flagged in observation, broad brush survey or relatively short term research in a designated area. The other is to assign numerical values to the indicators so that diversity scores can be calculated, and a qualitative numerical index on which to base the typology set out.

### *The form of this paper*

Section 1 sets out the elements of the problem and perspectives on localised urban systems in multi-cultural cities. Section 2 describes the basic open : closed ideal type model of these systems as it emerged out of comparative research in London. Section 3 is a short note on the succession of projects in which it has been applied. This prepares the ground for discussion of results from Turin, the most recent of them, which are sketched in Section 4. The Turin project stands as a pilot for the final phase of the cycle, still to be achieved, which is the subject of Section 5. The three-step aim now is to select a manageable set of open : closed indicators; to rank each of them on a qualitative numerical scale; to devise a typology of localised urban systems based on their cumulated scores. The final paragraphs speculate on the form and direction of future work required to achieve these aims.

## ONE - *the reasoning*

### **systems' perspective**

A systems' perspective underpins the project. In this work it has its origins in the holistic models of social anthropology, but is informed by applications in other disciplines. The common general element is a distinction between more and less complex systems. Peter Senge, the management guru,<sup>4</sup> distinguishes the *detail complexity* of so many variables that "all rational explanations are inherently incomplete"; and *dynamic complexity*, recognisable "when cause and effect are not close in time and space ...[when] obvious interventions do not produce expected outcomes". We need, he says, to look for underlying structures and patterns of behaviour - "the dynamics of the system that are obscured in the mass of detail".

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<sup>4</sup> Peter Senge [1990] *The Fifth Discipline* London: Century Business

Specialists now tend to be optimistic about mapping and measuring complexity of this kind by computer. Two recent books applying its mathematical logic to cultural and cognitive phenomena are helpful here.<sup>5</sup> In both the city appears, but tangentially, as one of innumerable examples of “complex adaptive system” whose “emergent aspect appears to transcend the actions of any individual.” On the one hand this perspective resonates with anthropological understandings of the social system. On the other, it affirms our credo that, ultimately, the complex “fury of daily events” is/ will be intelligible.<sup>6</sup>

In the classic essay “The kind of problem a city is”<sup>7</sup>, Jane Jacobs explores the same complexity point but, as an urban planner with cities in central focus, comes to a more directly relevant conclusion. She begins by distinguishing three kinds of scientific problem: First, *problems of simplicity* - involving only two variables, but leading to theories of light, sound, heat, electricity, then the car, the phone, the plane etc. Later, with probability theory and statistical mechanics [and computers !] it became technically possible to handle two billion variables, and so to consider *problems of disorganised complexity*. Because science can now manage near infinite detail, we can [apparently] solve problems of prediction, thermo-dynamics, communication [*sic* !] - even “the theory of knowledge itself”.

But not, she says, the problems of the city. These are commonly approached as *simple*, dependent: independent duos, or as *disorganised complex* problems “to which statistical methods hold the key”. Correctly, urban problems are neither. They are *problems of organised complexity*. Key to them is not that the number of variables is ‘moderate’ - more than two, less than two million - but that they are *interrelated*. As are the facts and factors of city life. These relational effects cannot be enumerated, even after the fact, and are not normally anticipated in the planning. Most often they stay in a black box of unintended consequences defined out of the planners’ frame.

The reality is that cities present “situations in which a half dozen or several dozen quantities are all varying simultaneously and in subtly interconnected ways “. Worse: cities “do not exhibit [just]one such problem which, if solved, explains all. Because of systematic connections between them, change in or of any one level of the system changes the (local) conditions of possibility and the capability of the whole. Moreover there are feedback loops throughout - i.e. change of one option creates a new outcome and in turn different options.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Stephen Johnson [2001] *Emergence: the connected lives of ants, brains, cities and software*. Mark Taylor [2002] *The Moment of Complexity: emerging network culture..* Both books are addressed in a review article by Adrian Woolfson, *London Review of Books*, 21 March 2002, pp. 27,28.

<sup>6</sup> Re: intelligibility see below, following Firth [1985].

<sup>7</sup> Jane Jacobs [1961] *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.

<sup>8</sup> This echoes Barth’s [ref] generative sequence: choice> change> new options.

This perspective sustains the assumption that, at each local level, the options for identity and livelihood, interaction, integration and [ultimately] communication are framed by the local boundary system – specifically, by how open or closed that system is. Empirical research is not, of course, so neat: the various options are in process, and the key elements of identity, interaction and boundary itself are not readily fixed to be counted or even mapped. This is the first essential problem of model systems. The next paragraph describes its anthropological version:

*When the anthropologist attempts to describe a social system he necessarily describes only a model of the social reality. The model represent in effect the anthropologist's hypothesis about 'how the social system works'. The different parts of the model system therefore...form a coherent whole – [the model represents] a system in equilibrium. But this does not imply that the social reality forms a coherent whole; on the contrary the reality situation is in most cases full of inconsistencies; and it is precisely these inconsistencies which can provide us with an understanding of the processes of social change.<sup>9</sup>*

### **invisibility**

The second essential problem is that so many elements of 'the reality situation' are invisible. Invisibility gets most attention in studies of those parts of the economic system that cannot be enumerated – i.e. of the 'informal' economy.<sup>10</sup> But we need to be clear that the informal is invisible not because it is not there – nor even because the economic establishment believes it is not there - but because, not being visible, it is not susceptible to regular quantitative measurement. It is left out of government analyses, local planning and policy assessment only because it will not fit into hard-edged categories. The same applies to cross-cultural relations in modern cities. Put into fuzzy<sup>11</sup> perspective however, invisible economic and cultural sub-systems can be made intelligible.

### **intelligibility**

Again: our assumption is that sub-systems which cannot be enumerated acquire another kind of intelligibility when the relationships characteristic of the parent local system are exposed. These relationships make the crucial difference between one local system and another: the *type* of system in view is decided by the nature of relationships holding it together<sup>12</sup>. Like the economic scope for migrant/ host

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<sup>9</sup> Leach 1954, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> This use of informality was coined by Keith Hart in 1973. See further Gershuny 1983; Archambault & Greffe 1984; Harding & Jenkins 1989; Gregory & Altman 1989. Gershuny's model is useful in that it itemises parts *within* the unenumerated system. This allows him to examine their interrelationship.

<sup>11</sup> Kosko's [1994:14] contrast between hard-edged and fuzzy-edged categories is apt. The former classification is binary: something is *either* A or it is not-A. The latter is multivalent: A *and* not-A.

<sup>12</sup> Wallman 1985, 2000, 2001a, b.



groups in any local system, the potential for communication among them depends on the style and scope of connections within the system and amongst its parts.

### **connectedness**

Because all the elements - quantifiable and non-quantifiable - are connected and interdependent, two things follow: Change in/of any one level of the system, changes the conditions of possibility<sup>13</sup> and the capability of the whole.<sup>14</sup> And there are feedback loops throughout: change of one option creates a new outcome and in turn different options.<sup>15</sup> But [probably] because the connections cannot be quantified, they tend to be left out of cross-cultural mapping. Most often they are put away in a black box of unintended consequences outside the planners' frame<sup>16</sup>.

### **categorical v. relational data.**

By contrast, in social anthropology there are strong precedents for dealing with relational effects. Notably, the quantifiable: non-quantifiable / formal: informal difference echoes the distinction between categorical and relational data - specifically, between survey and case study.<sup>17</sup> The interdependence of categorical and relational data is essential to the holistic tradition of the discipline. Moreover it confirms the importance of the invisible bits which the figures cannot count.

Conventionally in anthropology, the collection of invisible-because-non-quantifiable social data is served by 'qualitative' research - as it is here in part. But 'qualitative data' are notoriously non-specific; it can be difficult to persuade others of their 'scientific' weight. The need to communicate the insights of anthropology is always vital to its application<sup>18</sup> and doubly urgent where planned regeneration and unplanned migration play out in the same setting. Our aim is to chart connections within the local system *and* to make them intelligible to practitioners or other disciplines, with other priorities, and in other places. In effect its aim is to make the non-visible 'rest of the story' intelligible to a non-specialist audience.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Bourdieu 1977.

<sup>14</sup> Wallman 1997.

<sup>15</sup> This echoes Barth's [ref] generative sequence: choice> change> new options.

<sup>16</sup> Popper ref; Wallman 1977.

<sup>17</sup> This is the site of doctoral research in anthropology undertaken by Patrick Hazard at UCL.

<sup>18</sup> Leach makes the point only about people; here it is applied also to places. The parallel is vital given that this project is about relations between the two.

<sup>19</sup> Wallman 1997, 'Appropriate anthropology and...'

<sup>19</sup> Promising for this purpose are holistic and multi-layered computer visuals of 'the local system' in process which can be produced in ArcView. The strategy will be reported elsewhere.

## TWO - antecedents

The methodology for this work emerged in long term field research programs in three different cities<sup>20</sup>. Their formal titles indicate the steps in its development. Each study adds a perspective to be incorporated in the present typology project. The foundation study compared two London boroughs<sup>21</sup> [*“Resource options for Economy and Identity in the Inner City “* ]. It gave rise to the basic ideal type model which opposes open/heterogeneous and closed/homogeneous urban systems. The steps leading to its formulation are set out, along with the model itself, in Section 3.

The second study, based in Kampala, Uganda, found men and women to be embedded in different local systems and with different relation to the same urban village<sup>22</sup> [*“The Informal Economy of Health in African Cities”* ] The finding that men largely operate in an open: heterogenous local system while co-resident women operate in one which is relatively closed: homogeneous, demonstrates that sub-systems within the whole may vary in their relation to the parent system, and that they may differ from it in style.<sup>23</sup>

The third project compares the way numerically important ethnic minorities relate to each other and to the host community in two different areas within the old city of Turin. [*“Host: Migrant Options in the Informal Economy”* ]. An initial piece of work in the central market area was designed as a pilot; this final phase of the cycle will involve systematic comparison in a second area nearby<sup>24</sup>. The two areas have different histories and are differently affected by current efforts to regenerate the old city. This project takes forward the result of the comparison made in London: i.e. that the local system’s resilience to change varies with its degree of open: closedness. Further, timed to monitor change as it happens, it may test the possibility that emergent properties as well as present structures are/must be defining features of the local urban system.

## THREE - the model

### **the London project**

The ideal type model is abstracted, as ideals are, from ‘a mass of detail’. It is a second level abstraction; the first involved identifying dimensions of one local system [here Battersea in south London] and comparing them with the same dimensions in another [Bow in east London].

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<sup>20</sup> Respectively, the three projects were funded by ESRC, DfID [then ODA]; and again ESRC.

<sup>21</sup> Wallman 1982 *Living in South London*; 1984 *Eight London Households*; 1985 *Town & Country Planning*,

<sup>22</sup> Wallman 1996a *Kampala Women Getting By ; wellbeing in the time of AIDS* and following.

<sup>23</sup> This project is not reported here. It is compared with the London material in Wallman 1996b.

The procedure, from successive field studies to abstract model, is complicated but logical, involving a series of classifications. Bateson describes his experience of a similar effort: he "proceeded from a classification or typology to a study of the processes that generated the differences summarised in the typology... and having put a label on the processes, ...went on to a classification of *them*.." After all, "the vary act of perception is an act of logical typing."<sup>25</sup>

Even before the first level work began, observation of inner London showed that similarly mixed, low income areas can have different styles of livelihood. This was perceived [even] by ordinary people. Popular distinctions made between Battersea and Bow at that time were likely, if specified, to include reference to race relations or to the effects of economic recession, both 'better' in the first than in the second case.

The areas nevertheless are similar in superficial ways<sup>26</sup>: both are dominantly working-class, low income areas with a growing sprinkling of 'gentry' and a visible ethnic mix. But on the basis of historic and economic review of the two boroughs, and the ethnographic study of one neighbourhood in each, we found them to have very different economic patterns and different ways of defining 'outsiders'. Overall the Bow system comes across as homogeneous and rather closed; the Battersea system *by comparison*, as heterogeneous/open.

The project found ten points on which the contrast is unmistakable, and found the style of each area consistent throughout the ten dimensions. The following notes on each of them are 'an attempt to make [the similarities and differences] clear at the level of very superficial ethnography; the degree to which [they] can be distinguished at the level of social structure will only become apparent later on'.<sup>27</sup>

- *Industrial structure* is the most objective point of contrast. Battersea is made up of small firms and industries; Bow grew up round the three big industries of the London heartland – the docks, and the rag furniture trades – all now reduced in importance if not defunct, but the patterns of livelihood set by them continue.

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<sup>26</sup> Bateson XXXX pp 192, 190

<sup>26</sup> The ethnographic present here is late 1970s - early 1980s. It is likely that details of number and proportion have changed since then, but our expectation is that the characteristic styles of each area and the systematic differences between them have not. We hope to check this by follow up.

<sup>27</sup> Edmund Leach 1954, p. 29. Anthropological purists may be discomfited by my use of Leach 1954 throughout this paper: Highland Burma is a long way from urban Europe. But there is no better guide to the logic of abstract model systems; and anyway, at this level empirical facts are beside the point.

- *Industrial type* differs as much. In Battersea there are more service industries than manufacturing; in Bow the proportions are reversed.<sup>28</sup>
- *Employment opportunities* follow. Three dominant industries provide a narrow range of jobs in Bow, and the redundancy of any one of them is catastrophic. Many employers/workshops/factories mean more numerous and varied opportunities; when a garage or laundry closes in Battersea, at least some of those thrown out of work will find it in similar firms that have not folded – in Battersea or further away.
- *Travel to work patterns* are exactly opposite in the two areas: 65% of the male workforce travels out to work from Battersea; in Bow 65% work in the home borough – some close enough to walk to work,
- *Travel facilities* match this. Public transport in and out of the East End is [still] limited; Battersea has [always] had access to all London and beyond through Clapham Junction <sup>29</sup>.
- *Labour movement* of another kind upholds the contrast: the areas have opposite day/night population ratios. Battersea is a dormitory area; in the daytime residents move out and few outsiders commute in. Because the East End is/was an employment centre, Bow's population is bigger in the daytime than at night.
- *Housing options* are heterogeneous in Battersea, with varied housing stock and a mix of owner-occupation, private and public rental properties. In the Bow study area the houses are structurally identical, and in the wider borough 94% of housing is publicly owned: Bow residents have no chance to up/downgrade without leaving the local area; less choice in whether to buy or sell, whether and when to move.
- *Gatekeepers*. In Battersea there are so many routes to local job and housing resources that no one person or group can control access overall. In Bow there are fewer and the likelihood of exclusive access is much greater. Ethnic niche-ing is common in Bow and rare, perhaps impossible, in Battersea.
- *Criteria for membership*. One becomes 'local' to Battersea just by moving in, behaving appropriately and staying around. Belonging in Bow, in the East End tradition, is ascribed by birth, maybe by marriage, difficult even for the white English to achieve.
- Finally, *political traditions* of the two areas are quite unlike. Battersea has a reputation for openness and heterogeneity. Its ethos is 'internationalist' and little

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<sup>28</sup> i.e. were different in the past, and despite economic etc change, are different in the present.

<sup>29</sup> Clapham Junction, built in Victoria's reign, was then 'the biggest railway junction in the world'.

interested in peoples' origins. In 1913 it elected the first black mayor in the anglophone world; in the 1920s it sent an Indian communist to parliament. These elections do not signify Battersea is pro-black or pro-foreign; both men were supported as *local* people concerned with local issues.

Bow/East End political patterns are *ethnic* by contrast. This is the part of London where the famous British fascist, Sir Oswald Mosley, began an effective racist campaign; it is also the part of London which stopped him. Even today it is an area where some street conflicts are unambiguously racial conflicts. In Brick Lane, once entirely Jewish and now virtually all Bengali, the National Front and the non-white population have been seen to clash as distinct groups.

### **boundary systems**

These contrasts together imply that the more closed and homogeneous the local structure, the less flexible will be the local economy and social style. It is not that one kind of area has no shortages and the other has many, or that one area is viable and the other is not. Whatever the level of resources, the crucial difference shows in the way they are managed and distributed. By analogy, so will they differ in the way information and other cultural items are communicated.

The point is demonstrated when the two areas are visualised as different kinds of boundary system. In Figure I, suppose that one ring represents housing, another work, and the third something like social life – people I *choose* to spend time with. The Battersea [Type A] structure is open because there is no neat overlap of the rings or the domains they represent, and incomers need only cross one boundary to enter the local system. In practical terms, access to [say] housing confers the right to local status – and largely without reference to the ethnic etc status of the incomer.

By contrast, in the relatively closed/homogeneous Bow structure [Type B], the domains overlap more tightly and entry is much more difficult. Local residents are<sup>30</sup> likely to work locally in closely bounded groups, and the control of information about jobs will tend also to control access to other resources. The incomer arrow here shows that outsiders only earn local status by breaching all the boundaries together.

### **[Figure I : boundary systems]**

### **network effect**

The network effect of these boundary patterns brings the contrast down to the level of interaction and [so] communication [Figure II]. Two further essentials of the more open Battersea case [Type A] now show up. One is the core of relationships at the heart of the local system; open-ness notwithstanding, the system has a strong *localist*

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<sup>30</sup> The ethnographic present here is still around 1975. See also note 29 above.

identity. The other is the fact that most people have connections outside that core. And because their ties spread wider, the friends of their friends reach further and they are more able to pull in resources from other areas when the need arises. Hence the relative resilience of Type A systems in times of drastic change.

The Bow version [Type B] shows a tightly bounded local community and/but also the constraints of cosiness. When local resource domains overlap, the likelihood of interaction/communication with the wider outside, and of adapting to change, are more limited. By the same token, social relationships tend to be more multiplex and focused in discrete groups; the person you work with is also your neighbour and very likely also a kinsman of some degree. Type B local systems have a [relatively more] *ethnic* flavour.

### **[Figure II: network effect]**

#### **the local factor.**

Each type of model system engenders a characteristic local style. Ideal Type A is open, heterogeneous, adaptable; ideal Type B is closed, homogeneous, inflexible. The conditions giving rise to each version may be based in history, industrial structure and/or policy, but whatever their origins, the logic of social boundaries is such that one system is easier for incomers to make a home in than the other.

This approach is comparative rather than predictive, but the constellation of contrasts implies that the same input of government or other resources will have different impact in the two kinds of local system; and that similarly diverse mixes of culture may lead to very different inter-cultural communication patterns.

### **FOUR - *the test***

This next step demonstrates how hard it is to apply model systems to real places:

*At the level of abstraction it is not difficult to distinguish one formal pattern from another. The structures which the anthropologist describes are models which exist only as logical constructions in his own mind. What is much more difficult is to relate such abstractions to the data of empirical fieldwork.<sup>31</sup>*

#### **porta palazzo**

The pilot study for the Turin project was conducted in Porta Palazzo area in the historic centre. A full gamut of research methods, from broad brush survey based on simple observation, to personal life history interview enabled quantifiable [categorical] elements and non-quantifiable [relational] elements of the local system

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<sup>31</sup> Leach, op.cit., p.5.

to be mapped and layered. In the systems' perspective they are connected and interdependent [Section 1]; our objective remains to see which varies with what.

For Porta Palazzo we have combinations of categorical and relational data along six dimensions - each implicated in the options offered by the place and the outcome of choices made by the people[s] in it. These dimensions can be itemised as: basic architectural forms/ housing options<sup>32</sup>; the economy of the area/ options for work and livelihood; history of the area; livelihood and expectations of (local)<sup>33</sup> hosts; livelihood and expectations of migrants; demography; and the networks/ niches/ boundaries created by connections within the system. The style of Porta Palazzo, however, is much better read off an holistic portrait of the local system, even if, as in the following paragraphs, much of it is based on 'superficial ethnography'.

\* \* \*

Porta Palazzo is described as one of the largest open market spaces in Europe. It is the locus of Turin's vibrant informal economy and has 'always' been the reception area for in-migrants to Turin - in the 1950s as main entry point for southerners, lately for *extra-communitari*.<sup>34</sup> Also, in fact or by association, Porta Palazzo is the place where stolen goods are transacted.

Italians remain in substantial majority; a good proportion of them are native to the south or are the children of southerners. They too are migrants in origin. The various groups tolerate each other in the style said to be characteristic of Turin: '*Vicini, ma non insieme*'. [lit: 'neighbours, but not together'].

Few children are seen in the area - whether through invisibility or absence will be confirmed when we amalgamate age profiles with the sex ratios of each group. The Chinese appear to live as whole families and the Italians are largely remnant elderly. Sex ratios are consistently different: data for two small census units show increases in total numbers, but little change in the male: female balance in each group.<sup>35</sup> These

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<sup>32</sup> The architect responsible for the *Periferia* regeneration-by-participation project across Turin takes into account the form and construction of the buildings to be renovated when planning for the kind of people most appropriate to a particular part of town - whether rich/ poor, size of family or no family etc. Architecture limits the 'capability' of each area [Wallman 1997].

<sup>33</sup> National, European and global frames also impinge on the local system. They are not itemised here. In this work it is only dimensions of the local which are unpacked/ integrated [cf. Wallman 2001a].

<sup>34</sup> Migrants from outside the European Community - notably here from Africa and Eastern Europe.

<sup>35</sup> Amongst Albanians, there are 'always' between two and ten times more men than women; among Moroccans between three and 25 times as many men; and among Nigerians 'always' the opposite - this time between three and 25 times more women than men. Among the Chinese there are slightly more men but, consistent with high familism, they have near equal sex ratios. Successive censuses show the consistency: Zone 1 in 1991 counted 20 male/2 female Albanians; 154/100 Chinese; 473/18 Moroccans; 1/4 Nigerians. In 1999 there were 71/6 Albanians; 120/105 Chinese; 230/89 Moroccans;

differences begin to account for ethnic variation in patterns of work and residence, and so to explain why the hosts do not react the same way to all in-migrant groups.<sup>36</sup>

The restructuring of the city's economy which followed the downsizing of FIAT's Turin operation has deprived local workers, migrants and hosts alike, of the chance of a secure job; in a shrunken labour market there are fewer formal employment options of any kind. For some the principle constraint is lack of a residence permit, but even migrants with a full set of official *documenti* - indeed, even Italians themselves - are likely to be involved in unenumerated work in some way: where there are peddlers, for example, someone provisions them; and there is scope for those with legal contracts to 'employ' non-legal migrants. Certainly the informal economy thrives, and some make a secure livelihood within it. And just as certainly, change of the economic options disrupts patterns of competition and communication among the various groups.

A more current source of dramatic change, this time specific to Porta Palazzo, is a massive regeneration scheme.<sup>37</sup> Following a period of many decades in which the material fabric of the market and the surrounding streets was allowed to deteriorate, city and EU money has been made available for restoring, upgrading or rebuilding a variety of commercial and residential structures in the area.

On the material side, the plan has included the demolition of cumbersome buildings [to be replaced by others of more suitable design], and the digging of a large underpass to carry city traffic under rather than through the square. The amenity value of these physical changes is more obvious than the disruption caused by them: the market area is more open, its magnificent architecture has come back into focus, and property values have risen accordingly.

The social aims and consequences of the regeneration are more complex. Clean-up and regeneration, like economic restructuring, changes the balance between groups. Demolishing buildings gets rid of 'secret' spaces and drives out the activities once hidden in them. Turin, even more than other 'cultural capitals', values its cultural diversity. This has been its cherished characteristic, relative to other Italian cities, since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and is part of its appeal as host of the winter Olympics in 2006. Porta Palazzo is the city's diversity flagship. At least for these reasons there is a general and often explicit commitment to 'maintaining the immigrant presence' in the area. At the same time however, and for substantially the same reasons,

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5/15 Nigerians. Similarly for Zone 12 not far away: in 1991 Chinese 62/48; Moroccans 292/27; Nigerians 1/25. And in 1999 Albanians 43/26; Chinese 101/91; Moroccans 498/184; Nigerians 41/87 [Osservatorio Interistituzionale sugli Stranieri in Provincia di Torino, 1999].

<sup>36</sup> cf Wallman 2001b.

<sup>37</sup> Its highest profile element is "The Gate" Project, begun in 19xx, due to finish in 20xx.



undesirable elements must be removed: the area is to be made cleaner, safer, healthier; in all respects 'sanitised'.

Effects of this effort include the dislocation of certain criminal elements among the migrants – the secret places have gone, the authorities' presence is more marked, market space is more heavily regulated. Among plainly *unintended* consequences are those which eat away at the *desirable* diversity of the area. The rental market begins to price out legitimate business of ethnic shopkeepers; the new arty boutiques, some specialising in 'ethnic' items, are largely owned and run by Italians. Eventually also, as local cheap-because-poor housing is improved and gentrified, rents will rise and low income migrant families will move somewhere cheaper with their children.

We do not know whether these movements will leave the local system more homogeneous,<sup>38</sup> or even which measure of homogeneity/heterogeneity to use: the emergent properties of the system are still to be understood. Importantly [see again Section 1], their dynamic is 'not necessarily in the realm of empirical fact; it is a question, in part at any rate, of the attitudes and ideas of particular individuals at a particular time'.<sup>39</sup> Reviews of the livelihood and expectations of hosts and migrants is suggestive in this respect.

The local hosts represent numerous interest groups, each with its own take on past and future. Italian residents are mostly of long-standing and in remnant households. For them the area is now better because of renovation, and worse because of the migrants/drugs/danger package associated with it. The present reality is not what they remember, and the mismatch disrupts confidence and identity. Some of their hostility is directed towards the government which 'allows' migration and 'panders to' *extra-communitari*. The rightwing *Lega Nord* fuels the general anxiety.

Notionally on the other side of the boundary, important migrant groups, by *categorical* measures of race and number are Albanian, Chinese, Moroccan and Nigerian. the population is very diverse, But their visibility in local and media discourse are better explained by *relational* effects of livelihood, migration history and culture: each ethnic group 'gets by' and helps/antagonises the locals in different ways. Connections are crucial to group visibility or irritant value: the local Nigerian economy is encapsulated; Moroccan livelihood involves more encounter of every sort with the host population. Expectations effect the experience of work as significantly as rates of pay. The role of sex work in the economic project of migrants, for example, is not the same for all the ethnic groups involved in it.

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<sup>38</sup> Two experts think it inevitable. See 'The self-destruction of diversity' described by Jane Jacobs [op.cit.]; and from Leach: 'I do not deny that within [this] area there is a great diversity of culture, but that it should be a stable diversity is for me inconceivable'. [op.cit., p. 291].

<sup>39</sup> Leach, op.cit, p. 286.

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The integrated picture of Porta Palazzo suggests open-ness and heterogeneity – an A type [Battersea] system. The fact that the elements mapped to produce it, intuitively the most crucial, are different in more than number from the ten of the original model [Section 3], need not impede the classification process. ‘

*The same element of social structure may appear in one cultural dress in locality [X] and another...in locality [Y]... [The difference] does not necessarily imply that [the localities] belong to ...different social systems.’<sup>40</sup>*

For some purposes ethnographic facts are less important than the logic of the theory.<sup>41</sup> For our purposes the point is that there are varieties as well as degrees of open- and closed-ness. The same reasoning needs to be applied to the study of Piazza Cerignola, the second element of the Turin project and one of the places that migrants leaving Porta Palazzo will move to.

The two areas show a useful range of similarities and differences. Both are dominated by a daily market [five mornings and all day Saturday] in which the stall holders are largely – in Piazza Cerignola entirely - Italian and, being under the same city policy and ideology, both are subject to plans for renovation and extension of the market area. The time scales are different: rebuilding is nearly finished in Porta Palazzo, and in Piazza Cerignola it is about to begin. The order of regeneration projects probably reflects the fact that the two areas are differently affected by population movement in Turin. Within a steady downward trend overall,<sup>42</sup> the zone containing Porta Palazzo [Zona 1] is among 26 showing a decrease or at most an increase of less than 5% in the number of [registered] *stranieri*; the zone containing Piazza Cerignola [Zona 38] is one of 13 showing an increase in the range 15-25%. The numbers, though rising, are very much smaller in this second case and may remain so; but so high a *percentage* increase is an indicator of the shock of change.

The second Turin study is still in train; there is less detailed material available for analysis, but we are able to monitor developments as they happen. In any case Piazza Cerignola already has a clear role in the typology-making process; it offers a sounding board against which Porta Palazzo can be tested by comparison. Our expectation is that the two systems are *qualitatively*<sup>43</sup> different, i.e. more or less

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<sup>40</sup> Leach, op.cit. , p. 16.

<sup>41</sup> Firth, in Leach, op.cit., p. vii.

<sup>42</sup> Turin’s overall [enumerated] population has been dropping slowly since the late 1980s. Between 1991 and 2001 it fell from 979,839 to 899,806; in the year from 2000 to 2001 numbers fell by 1204.

<sup>43</sup>*Qualitative* here refers to measures of less/more, not to unmeasurable quantities – as it does in the quantitative: qualitative opposition of data types conventionally used in social anthropology.

open/closed, and will adapt to change in characteristic ways [as Section 3]. Our procedure follows the London model; if the model is good, its logic will hold.

### **piazza cerignola**

As the small exodus of migrants moves from the hub of Porta Palazzo along the tram line up Corso Giulio Cesare and northwards into the suburbs, the *extra-communitari* presence is just beginning to be felt in Piazza Cerignola. At the same time, a renovation and enlargement building project is soon to start in the area. These two processes combined will be disruptive: the area has been unmixed since the 1920s when it became home to the first large wave of migrants from southern Italy; it has remained stable since. The history, and even now, the everyday life of the area<sup>44</sup> imply cultural homogeneity: this is – has been – an ethnic enclave.

Piazza Cerignola is 20-30 minutes away from the city centre.<sup>45</sup> With the surrounding area, it was incorporated into the city proper after WW1, when Turin began to expand northward. Over the decade from late 1940 many more southern migrants moved in, still largely from Puglia. The area was then still surrounded by factories - importantly CEAT [now defunct, demolished, with new council housing over part of the wasteland it left], and with large FIAT establishments nearby.

Now, 50-60 years later, when the original economic base of the area is gone, the pugliese dialect is still heard everywhere. A number of shops sell 'pugliese specialties'; the market itself stocks better and more of them than an equivalent market in Rome. This strong pugliese presence was expressed in a movement to rename the square Cerignola, after a town in Puglia province. Its official name remains Piazza Feroni, but people from Puglia, and their very local Torinesi neighbours, always refer to it as Piazza Cerignola,

Their claim is underlined by visible cultural emblems. On one side of the square there is a high niche housing the Madonna della Ripalta. She is the protector of Cerignola town, and is depicted in a mural in its cathedral. A fullscale copy of the painting hangs in the church near the Piazza. Each year in June this picture is taken from the church and paraded through surrounding streets, finishing up in the piazza where speeches are made – at least one by the Mayor of Cerignola, who will have come to Turin for the celebrations, and one by the President of *La Cicogna*, a cultural association for the Cerignolani in Turin.

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<sup>44</sup> From the preliminary observations of Patrick Hazard.

<sup>45</sup> Porta Palazzo is five minutes from the centre.

<sup>45</sup> The wider Porta Palazzo area is *Circonscrizione 1, Zone Statistiche 1, 2 12, Distretti socio-assistenziale 01A, 07A*. Our field research area corresponds to *Zona 1, Distretto 01A*. Piazza Cerignola falls in *Circonscrizione 6, Zona 38, Distretto 06A*. The smallest census units are best for comparison.

### **comparison**

With the possibility of implicit comparison, one place with another, it is not difficult to classify a local system intuitively: – this place *feels* more closed, more homogeneous than that; Piazza Cerignola *feels* more closed/homogeneous than Porta Palazzo. Often, as in this case, the intuitive judgement is echoed in formal enumerations: census data reveal more children and old people in Piazza Cerignola; more long term residents; a smaller proportion born outside Italy...<sup>46</sup>

But the hard fact, for purposes of prediction, is that local styles of diversity are not simple functions of cultural emblems, multi-cultural presence or rates of familism, The city is not a two variable problem: the effects of difference of or change in proportions of people in particular categories in the population – demographic, ethnic, economic - is decided by their relation to other categories and by other things happening in the system. Again: ‘The key to urban problems is not the number of variables but their interrelationship’. To know *which* variables, and *in relation to* which others, are definitive, we need to compare, item by item, both categorical and relational dimensions of the two systems.

It is right that the initial separation of like from unlike should be intuitive; formalising it, spelling it out, comes after. First, hunches about which differences make a difference [between one urban system and another] must be made explicit. Second, a key which makes the logic of the classification plain enough to be used by other people in other settings needs to be constructed. Third, although we already know the general implications of open/closed-ness for adaptation, communication etc, the practical value of typology is limited unless we are able to specify them.

None of this can be attempted until we know the baseline position of each system on the open: closed continuum and are able to do more than guess how each is/will be affected by economic and population change. The exercise is not straightforward: ‘A ... model version of each ...type is fairly precise, but the application of these categories to actual communities is decidedly flexible. Although the ideal types are distinct, the practical types overlap.’<sup>47</sup> This is amply demonstrated by the effort to ‘type’ Porta Palazzo.

## **FIVE – the typology**

### **classification**

The superficial description of Porta Palazzo implies open-ness and heterogeneity – at first sight an A type [Battersea] system [Figure I]. But closer matching shows up important discrepancies. Porta Palazzo in this era is off the open end of the

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<sup>47</sup> Leach, op.cit., p.286.

continuum and best visualised as a cluster of disaggregated circles to the left of Type A [Figure III]. In this view the system is both A and not-A.<sup>48</sup> Intuition and ethnography suggest four possible explanations of the processes driving it.

### **[Figure III - Porta Palazzo]**

*Possibility [a.]* It is a system evolving. In flux. Not yet integrated in a stable form. Torn apart by the disruptions of the regeneration project. The connections between the various dimensions remain malleable and the logic of the system is swinging about<sup>49</sup>.

*Possibility [b.]* Each of the sub-systems (imagined as separate circles) is closed, ethnic, homogeneous – a miniature version of Type B.; while the system as a whole is, or aims to be, Type A - open, heterogeneous, localist. Visualise a circle enclosing the sub-systems.

*Possibility [c.]* Perhaps different dimensions of the system are in different places on the open-to-closed scale. Previous research in Kampala found men's relation to the local is open, women's relatively closed.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps here the subsystem / system levels have opposite styles - i.e. small homogeneous circles inside a heterogeneous whole.

*Possibility [d.]* It is a prior or nascent form of Type A. Development towards A-ness might be endogenous, but equally may be subject to 'assistance' from outside: Type A, after all, is politically desirable. In the real life Porta Palazzo scenario, it will be in the interest of the city government, the Gate Project, the Olympic committee, and of shopkeepers and residents in the area to avoid the extremes of pre-A chaos [version a.] and the perpetuation of multiple separate and unintegrated B types [version b].

Difficult operational decisions follow. What kinds of intervention does it take to move the system in the direction desired? How much force can government planners, politicians and the like exert on it without offending important constituents<sup>51</sup>, creating a backlash, or simply feeling bad about what they do ?

Note in Figure III that not all the miniature B-type subsystems are free-standing. This calls to mind the possibility that the content of the boundaries, which are also contact points, is not uniform. The likelihood of conflict, competition or integration

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<sup>48</sup> See again Kosko, footnote 12.

<sup>49</sup> All systems are 'moving', not static but in process. Their logic however is consistent. The situation here is or maybe other - chaotic ? not yet systematic ?

<sup>50</sup> Wallman 1996a,b.

<sup>51</sup> Jeremy Harding, in *The Uninvited* writes of the no win situation of a democratic government need, when dealing with large influx of desperate people to be liberal enough for some voters and hard line enough for others.

happening across them, therefore, is very variable.<sup>52</sup> One element in the currency of communication between hosts and Nigerians is prostitution; between hosts and Moroccans, drugs. The Chinese supply goods for Nigerian and Moroccan street merchants or shop-keepers to sell.

Of course not all the Torinesi Chinese are in small scale commerce, not all the Nigerians – nor indeed all the hosts – are involved in prostitution, and not all the Moroccans (or the Italians !) deal in drugs. But these high-profile transactions colour each group's image of the other and profoundly affect relations between them.

### **pruning**

A visual image is a data set containing different sorts of information – colour, edge, contrast. The eye compresses the image to make it manageable, selecting from it what the brain is looking for. The same goes for mental images of a local system. Which types of information among the many available must I retain so the system has the sense I need? Which characteristics/ dimensions/ vectors make the significant difference between one system another? How many are we looking for?

The computer of course can handle any number of variables, but decisions about this typology are not problems that computation can solve: urban systems vary as systems of relationships, but not in ways that can be counted.<sup>53</sup> In the Porta Palazzo study a couple of dozen 'dimensions' were mapped, then boiled down to six on the grounds that any more would be hard to manage and harder to grasp. Yet even these six are not right for a general typology; they may represent Porta Palazzo adequately enough, but some of them apply uniquely to *that* local system – just as some of the ten dimensions of the Battersea: Bow contrast are peculiar only to it.

The next step in the typology project will not be achieved by simply going further into the detail of specific cases; that was the requirement of earlier phases of work. Now it demands a leap to higher levels of abstraction; to questions provoked less by observation of local areas than by the hypothesis which underpins our models of them. Images can be compressed and details pruned down to ideal in the light of it.

Our most obvious option here is the compressed/pruned/ideal type image of the Battersea: Bow, heterogeneous: homogeneous, open: closed contrast [Section 3]. It is this *image* which makes the difference between the two areas intelligible *as systems*. Key to it is the extent to which identity and economic contexts of livelihood overlap.

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<sup>52</sup> The model, in effect, is a still shot of this process.

<sup>53</sup> This point reprises Jane Jacobs 1961, quoted in Section 1.

### **continuum**

The number of contexts represented as rings of the Venn diagram [Figure I] is arbitrary, and the labels given them to explicate it were chosen 'for instance'.<sup>54</sup> But origin, work, and locality happen also to be significant loci of association and group identity everywhere; only the way the population relates to them varies. Since the typology needs to reflect how people in a given system move – together and apart – *and* how they feel about it, the three dimensions provide a set of flags few enough, abstract enough and intuitively good enough to signal open: closedness also in other places.

The basic model implies a continuum between open and closed ideals. Suppose it is possible first to score each 'real' area as a system closer to/ further away from each end of it, then to reveal the logic of its process up or down the scale. Since a layered scale will make the scoring procedure more manageable, let each of the three flags be given a separate score between the two extremes [Figure IV]. Note that these scores are *qualitative* or *relational* values, answering yes: no, more: less kinds of question.<sup>55</sup>

#### **[Figure IV - scales of open/ closed]**

Ultimately the three scores need to be brought back together and their connections *within that particular system* indicated. The cumulated score ranks the system [as though] in equilibrium; the interrelationship of the separate dimensions makes it a system in process. These relationships decide what will happen next – i.e. the system's emergent properties.

### **SIX - conclusion**

#### **revision ?**

This procedure is one way to type Porta Palazzo as a system. Its peculiar dynamic can be charted as movement[s] between open and closed ends of the basic Battersea: Bow, A:B continuum. But even layered scoring will not account for the sense of it being off-scale, beyond A and yet not B. Would it help to postulate a third type ? To revise the model ? The 'chaos' of Porta Palazzo becomes intelligible as the open, left hand extreme of the continuum. Bow remains the prototype closed, right hand extreme, but Battersea now represents an equilibrium mid-point [Figure V]. In this position *the significance of heterogeneity with a localist central core* is appreciated.

#### **[Figure V - the model revised]**

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<sup>54</sup> *viz* in Section 3 above: '... suppose that one ring represents housing, another work, and the third something like social life – people I *choose* to spend time with.'

<sup>54</sup> As footnote 44.

This new version makes clear that it is the 'invisible' relations among component parts, not simply the nature of the parts themselves, which make a local system and can distinguish one type from another. It also brings the discussion back to the issue of diversity itself. Where is it in the model ? What is it in the city ?

Either the open: closed continuum is a *styles of* diversity index, driven by differences in the ways that similarly mixed populations manage their mixture. Or diversity is at one end of the scale, and the continuum measures more or less of it, not different kinds. A third option emerges from systems' logic [Section 1]; diversity is a delicate equilibrium moment which happens only when all the necessary elements coincide.<sup>56</sup>

For Jane Jacobs', diversity is vital; without it, the urban system declines as a living place and a place to live. Homogeneity is monotony; the death of the system, not another 'style' of viability.<sup>57</sup> Diversity as she recommends it is indeed Type A - open, mixed, and/ but including the crucial *solid core of interrelatedness*.. Open-ness without these connections is unstable chaos. This means that interventions in Porta Palazzo should be (are intended to be ?), pushing the evolving system towards the diversity-as-equilibrium mid-point - now Type A in Figure V.

#### **next ?**

This paper is presented in a preliminary and discursive form which invites the workshop's help in designing the next research. Preliminary notes on method and methodology are appended to indicate the kind of work necessary to complete the index and operationalize the typology. Inevitably the model has to come back to ground and into the complex untidiness of ordinary city life. And inevitably the question remains: How can such a model most usefully be applied to real situations ?

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### APPENDIX ON THE METHODS

#### A. Overview

Assuming a local area with mixed architectural, residential options; a labour market with some variety of work options; and a population of multiple cultural origins:

Assign qualitative scale values to the [significant] dimensions [of the system].

housing: derelict/refurbished? mixed/uniform ? public/private ? live/work?

work: formal/informal ? home area/away ? niches ? (mechanical/organic?)

local population: age: sex: familism ? transient/committed? ethnic mix ?

If: the place has a hetero pop i.e. ethnic [or similar categorical] mixture of people,

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<sup>56</sup> The *delicacy* of the equilibrium moment is essential to it - as Leach [op.cit. pp 6; 291 and intra]; Levi-Strauss **ref.** and Jane Jacobs who refers to the delicacy of diversity itself [fn 38].

<sup>57</sup> Jacobs, op.cit., p.229. I argued otherwise in Wallman 1985, but would not do so now.



Then ask: Are they also mixed across work and local options ? [i.e. w/o niche-ing]  
Or: Are some groups concentrated in particular work options and others spread ?  
And/or: Are some concentrated in specific housing options and others spread ?

If: there are heterogeneous work options,  
Then ask: is there a mix of people across those options ?  
Or: are particular groups associated with particular options ?

Equally: if work options are homogeneous,  
Still ask: is there a hetero mix of people across those options ?

If: there is a hetero range of housing, architectural, infra-structural options  
Then ask: is there a hetero spread of ethnics across those options ?  
Or: are particular groups associated with particular options ?

- Having done this, calculate the congruence of each dimension to the other. A second number-value can be given to indicate it. i.e. Full overlap of any two = 1.

DETAIL QUESTION: Are [the dimensions] congruent ? (how far do they overlap?)

And assess what degree / kind of interconnectedness [between them] ?

DYNAMIC QUESTION: Do they vary together ? (whether congruent or not)

### B. Detail

1. Design a COMBINATION of methods, and the TRIANGULATION of different kinds of data.. **Q 1 Does the same style come across in all the data sorts ?**

- *Etic* elements can be mapped by means of broad brush survey and simple observation: work options and housing options, populations and their movement. Consider how far work, housing and leisure are overlaid. How diverse is each one? On what time: activity cycles does the population move in. out, through the area ? What are the demographic, time, associative patterns of the various groups the area?
- *Emic* elements are gleaned by inference, from interview, participation etc. How do different kinds of people identify with a place, job, group.? What does each mean to them?

### **2. PREPARATION [pre-survey]**

- Identify resources available for the work to be done [money, people, time..]
- Identify audiences for the product [as far as possible!]
- Define the boundaries and draw a physical profile of the area.
- Identify relevant historical features/ events
- Map building stock: architecture, condition, function, ownership
- Map movement of population, traffic infrastructure, daily/weekly patterns
- Document local options for livelihood [economic aspects] and housing
- Document categories of people [by ethnicity, skills, demography etc]
- Design and pilot the Broad Brush Survey [BBS] and output formats.

### 3. ACTIVITIES [fieldwork]

- Carry out full BBS once and repeat field observations at selected time intervals.  
*Output:* Survey questionnaires/maps completed, 10% repeated to check accuracy.
- Carry out individual and group interviews across the population range.  
*Output:* Aural/written records of in-depth interviews, life histories, focus groups.
- Set up a log book to detail the process and progress of the work day by day.  
*Output:* Running assessment of method and methodology. i.e. >  
Gaps, weaknesses, absences identified. Adaptations of design recorded.

### 4. RESULTS [data]

#### a. re: the place

- Maps to show distribution of people, buildings, transport etc across the area.
- An account of the composition of the categories mapped, a key for each classification..
- Photographs and videos of the physical area and public events, local public meetings.

#### b. re: the people

- Stories/narratives of people in the area and their relation to it.
- Input, via debriefing, of local people working with the project.
- Interviews/chats with public servants and other 'authorities' concerned..

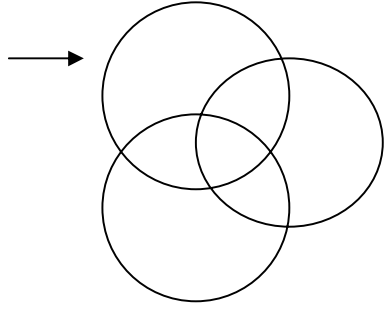
### 5. INDEX [1st objective]

- Analyse these data for evidence of styles of ethnicity/work/localism flags.
- Assign qualitative values – i.e. of more: less openness/diversity – to each flag.
- Cumulate values to position the local system on the open: closed continuum.

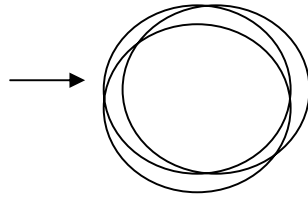
### 6. APPLICATION [2nd objective]

Assess, explain practical implications of being at point X on the continuum.

- Make a synthesis for communication to and /or use by various audiences.



A



B

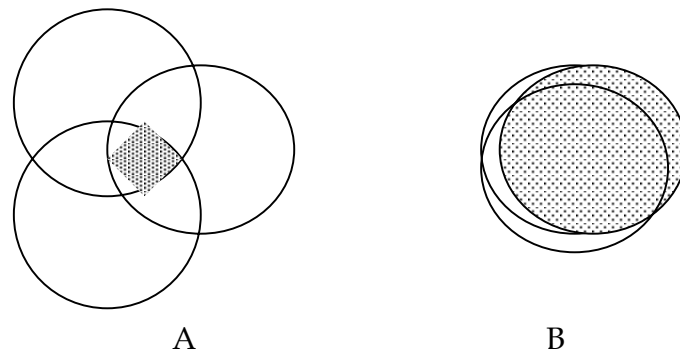
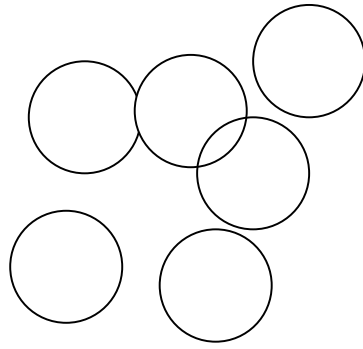


Figure II: Network effect

Figure III: Porta Palazzo



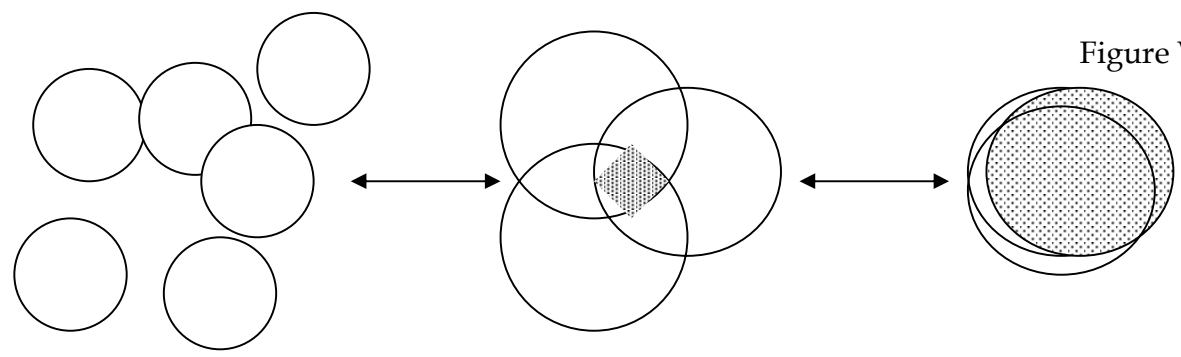


Figure V: The model revised

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