

COMPLETED DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS

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Our Bikes in the Middle of the Street: Community-building, Racism and Gentrification in Urban Bicycle Advocacy

It is no surprise to people living in U.S. urban spaces that bicycling continues its ascent into popularity. Neighbourhoods and cities across the country are now committed to making their spaces welcoming to bicyclists which include bicycling events, bicycle lanes, and businesses that cater to cyclists. In my time as an urban bicycle commuter, I have noticed that a particular bicyclist is being hailed by neighbourhoods and cities—one that has both racial and class privilege. Through my ethnographic research in three U.S. cities I have confirmed my suspicion that the bicycle signifies different values and meanings to different bicycling demographics. In this dissertation I ultimately argue that the ‘rolling signification’ of the bicycle contributes to its ability to build community, influence gentrifying urban planning, and reify and obscure systemic race and class barriers. I begin my dissertation with a case study on the Riverwest 24, a 24-hour bicycle race, and how its organizers and participants build community but I complicate this understanding of community building by exploring the neighbourhood’s long history of activism and its spatial connection to a major segregation line. The importance of a neighbourhood’s history as it intersects with bicycle advocacy is made clear in my second case study in Portland, Oregon where neighbours clashed, along racial lines, about renovating a specific bicycle lane. And thus I argue that the Black residents and history rooted in Black culture in Portland’s Albina neighbourhood produce a haunting (Gordon, 1997) within the reconstruction of that bicycle lane. In my final case study I explore whether the theory that bicycle lanes can lead to gentrification holds any merit. In Minneapolis I have found evidence that the local government is coopting bicycle infrastructure to recruit educated, upwardly mobile people—with little regard to its impact on residents who fall outside of that demographic. This cooptation is wrapped up in power relations that allow the city government and ‘creative class’ to define what a sustainable and livable city looks like. This dissertation makes a rather large intervention in Communication Studies as it illustrates the importance of rich description, spatial analysis, and ethnography in our scholarship.

Dr Melody Lynn Hoffmann is a professor and researcher in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She obtained her PhD in Communication Studies at the University Minnesota. Her research focuses on community responses to bicycle advocacy in urban U.S. spaces. She works closely with local transportation organizations to develop new research and best practices in regards to equitable bicycle infrastructure

planning. In the classroom, Dr. Hoffmann teaches topics including social movements, community-based research, and critical race and class theory.

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Development in Europe: Ideas, Discourses and Strategies of European Cohesion Policy

The aim of this dissertation was to conduct an analysis of the degree of autonomy given to the Regions of Southern Italy in accordance to development programs financed by European Cohesion Policy. The central issue concerns how Regions belonging to Southern Italy have adapted to EU Cohesion Policies and to the multilevel governance model they imply. The hypothesis advanced is that such Regions, during the periods of the budget cycles of structural funds (2000-2006 and 2007-2013), have suffered a reduction of institutional autonomy, and this has had a significant influence on the development strategies later adopted.

The dissertation argues that the Regional Policy carried out by the EU has brought about a growing normative homogenization at the expense of territorial peculiarities and locally usable resources. From this perspective, then, the close examination of the strategy adopted by the EU to support the growth process of regional institutions, which partially started in Italy during the Nineties thanks to a series of political and administrative reforms, becomes crucial. In fact, the theme of the growth process has not been yet scientifically examined and, within the growth process itself, the wish to incentivise the autonomy of regions – through principles and practices linked to a public policy endogenous approach – looks to have weakened the real propensity to verify results. In conclusion, the analysis is empirically based on the documents produced at regional level to define long-term development strategies, namely Regional Operative Plans. In essence, these documents should testify to the actual capacity of the regions of southern Italy for rethinking their development-related self-governance by respecting the economic and social complexity peculiar to the territories. Moreover, other useful data have been collected through in-depth interviews with privileged witnesses who are involved, at different levels, with the conceptualization and the execution of the cohesion policy.

Dr Enrico Sacco obtained his *Laurea degree in Sociology* and then a *PhD in Sociology and Social Research* at the University of Naples Federico II. His chief research interests are in *Sociology of Economic Development in a comparative perspective*. He has completed his *PhD thesis on European Cohesion Policy* and has revised various publications concerning territorial development processes and policies. Among his recent publications are *'Under the Messina Bridge: Conflict, Governance and Participation'* published in the *Urbanities* (2013, with I. Scotti), and *'The crisis and entrepreneurs'* (in P. De Vivo ed., *Settori di specializzazione del territorio della Provincia di Napoli*. 2014).

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Objects of Worship: Material Culture in the Production of Shamanic Rituals in South Korea

This dissertation shows how contemporary Korean shamanism (*musok*) continues to flourish in a hyper technological society, thanks to various adjustments and innovations in the material culture that supports this religious practice.

It was often thought that with the advent of technology and modernity mystic experiences and animistic practices would become extinct while giving way to scientific approaches to life. However, in contemporary South Korea, fast technological progress co-exists with traditions of direct communication with multitudes of gods and spirits. Such communication is enabled by several hundred thousands of professional mediators, mostly women called *manshin*, who perform possession-trance techniques.

In the process of mediating between people and supernatural entities many objects are deemed indispensable. Costly offerings of food, drink, animals, and decoration are displayed on elaborate altars, and *manshin*'s bodies attract spirits and gods to possess them by wearing symbolic outfits. In *musok* worldviews, not only humans enjoy beautiful artifacts, tasty meals, and festive dance and song. *Manshin* are therefore engaged in a reciprocal relationship in which they provide respectful and amusing rituals and in return receive supernatural help in divining the future, healing the sick, and preventing misfortunes.

This investigation of the material aspects of *musok* is based on a year of fieldwork and analysis of historical photographs. During the research, interviews and participant observations of *musok* practitioners, artists, art dealers, museum curators, collectors, media people and scholars were conducted in order to review the topic from a holistic perspective. The findings unfolds a wealth of information on how commodification, the penetration of digital media, and a national need for indigenous culture displays are the main processes that drive the production, use, circulation, and exhibition of *musok* artifacts in South Korea. The various chapters discuss specific rituals and entities, representations of the supernatural in artifacts, and recontextualization of *musok* in museums, collections, and digital media.

This research suggests that *musok* material culture is designed and used in discursive contexts where cultural identities, meanings, and values are created, maintained, and manipulated by various agencies and people who work to mediate between humans, objects, and supernatural entities.

Dr Liora Sarfati teaches at the Department of East Asian Studies of Tel Aviv University. Her ethnographic research explores the production of shamanic rituals in contemporary South Korea and pilgrimage in Israel. Her book manuscript *From Ritual to the World Wide Web: Mediums of Representation in Korean Shamanism* discusses shamanism in rituals, museums, films, television and the Internet. In this monograph she analyses new forms of reproducing knowledge and practice in mediated manners that add new contexts to rituals that reach back to pre-modern Korea. Her methodology includes participant observation, depth interviews, and text analysis. Performance studies and phenomenological ethnography are the main paradigms that guide her work on the roles of religion and spirituality in post-industrial urban societies.

Name: Ivano Scotti,

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Reconstructing Solidarity: Communicative Action in Fair Trade Organizations

This thesis proposes an original analysis on the corporate communication process. Starting on the assumption, widely credited in the scientific literature, that subjects involved in the organizational life of corporates cooperate thanks to the sharing values, norms and interests (social solidarity) constructed in communication processes, this study focused on organizational changes in a kind of enterprise where ethical values are a fundamental aspect. Using communication action theory as a framework for analysis, this study focused on the communicative practices and mediation-construction process of social solidarity in the fair trade organization 'e' pappece' of Naples (Italy) where ethic principals constitute a fundamental aspect of their economic action. This research stressed the ambiguity in internal communication processes, particularly regarding organization changes to face market constraints and requested, and legislative obligations. All these pressures created stress in the internal solidarity that required a response. Communicative processes were used to reduce the stress and reconstruct solidarity among corporate members. However, as the study shows, it seems that for an organization in which ethical values are particularly fundamental, it is difficult to reconstruct solidarity without compromising the stability of the group. This is the reason why organizations instead of solving these kinds of problems, often prefer not to completely solve conflicts between the original (ethical) corporate mission and the pressures of market and legislative constrains to its organization actions.

Dr Ivano Scotti is Research fellow at the Department of Social Sciences, University of Naples 'Federico II' (Italy), where he obtained his PhD in 2009 and currently, he is assistant teacher in sociology of corporate communication at the same Department. He adopted some key concepts of Habermas' theory as analytic framework. Recently, adapting that theoretical perspective, his researches are focused on energy issues, particularly on energy sustainable transition linked to social acceptance / social innovation processes at local level.

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The House That Miss Ruby Built: Conceptions of Identity, Value and Social Relationships in Limited Equity Cooperatives

My dissertation examines a specific form of low-income homeownership in New York City known as limited equity cooperatives (LECs). I investigate conceptions of property relations among low-income urban people of colour as they transition to homeownership in these housing cooperatives, as well as the role of the Urban Homesteading Assistance Board (UHAB), an organization in New York City that assists renters in their transformation into cooperative homeowners. Using an LEC located in the Harlem/Washington Heights area as a case study, I explore how residents negotiate their new roles as collective owners, not renters, and argue that these new economic practices transform their subjectivities and social relationships, highlighting the inextricable (and mutually constitutive) links binding race, ethnicity, gender and class. My research uses an immersion-based ethnographic approach conducted over two-and-a-half years that includes participant observation, semi-structured interviews and life histories with various actors in the affordable housing landscape, along with document analysis, as well as content and discourse analysis. I illuminate the larger issues of urban poverty, gentrification, housing/homeownership as a cultural expectation, and the links between urbanization and capitalist logics of accumulation and social organization.

My research uses heterotopia as part of its overarching theoretical framework. Foucault introduced the term heterotopia to refer to spaces outside of everyday life that construct their own rules and maintain insider/outsider delineations. Because of the collective nature of LECs, they have the ability to engage in contradictory modes of value by both subverting and upholding neoliberal ideology. These co-ops offer the potential for urban activism as ‘pockets of resistance’ against social injustice and housing inequality. By blurring the private/public boundary, LECs shed light on the intersection between public policy and individual experience, and offer a model for how these contradictory forces can be balanced. Additionally, I analyze why the American Dream of homeownership remains entrenched in the collective psyche despite overwhelming proof of its economic, political and social costs, focusing on how certain non-commodified housing forms have the potential to make this dream less risky.

Jill Siegel is a Ph.D. candidate in anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania who will receive her degree in May 2014. Her research interests include urban anthropology, the anthropology of space, property, value, race and gender.