

**FROM PEAR TREES TO PORSCHES:**  
*An Urban Analysis of Parioli*



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# Table of Contents

## **Introduction: Benvenuto a Parioli.....1**

*Preface (pg 1)*

*Theoretical Background (pg 1)*

## **Methodology.....5**

## **People.....8**

*Race and Ethnicity (pg 8)*

*Age (pg 11)*

*Integration and Sense of Community (pg 12)*

## **Commerce.....14**

*Office Space (pg 14)*

*Retail (pg 15)*

*Food and Beverages (pg 16)*

## **Housing and Urban Design.....21**

## **Transportation.....28**

*The Process (pg 28)*

*Observations (pg 29)*

*Neighborhood Survey (pg 31)*

*Public Transit Comparison (pg 32)*

## **Facilities and Services.....34**

*Facility Focus: Parco della Musica (pg 36)*

## **Green Space.....39**

*Piazzale Don Giovanni Minzoni (pg 40)*

*Via Paolo Bartolini (pg 40)*

*Villa Glori (pg 41)*

## **Public Space.....42**

*Piazza Euclide (pg 42)*

## **Conclusion.....43**

## Index of Images

Image #1: *Parioli Street with people (pg 8)*

Image #2: *Ultra Right-wing graffiti (pg 12)*

Image #3: *Parioli Market (pg 16)*

Image #4: *Residential street lined with parked cars (pg 22)*

Image #5: *Comparative table of apartment values (pg 24)*

Image #6: *Comparative graph of housing occupancy (pg25)*

Image #7: *Comparative graph of rooms per apartment (pg 26)*

Image #8: *Arial photo with main thoroughfares highlighted (pg 29)*

Image #9: *Arial photo with ATAC lines highlighted (pg 29)*

Image #10: *Transportation survey form (pg 32)*

Image #11: *Arial photo of Parioli with rail lines highlighted (pg 32)*

Image #12: *Comparative graph of public facilities in Parioli and Rome (pg 34)*

Image #13: *Comparative graph of leisure facilities in Parioli and Rome (pg 35)*

Image #14: *Auditorium: Parco della Musica (pg 36)*

Image #15: *Piazzale on Viale Bruno Buozzi (pg 40)*

Image #16: *Via Paolo Bartolini (pg 40)*

## Appendices

Appendix A: Parioli Neighborhood Parcel Survey

Appendix B: Parioli Neighborhood Street Survey

Appendix C: Population by Age and Sex, 1991

Appendix D: Housing and Population Statistics, Parioli 1981-1991

Appendix E: Transportation Questionnaire Results

Appendix F: Neighborhood Survey Results

Appendix G: Parioli Aerial Photo

Appendix H: Map of Parioli

Appendix I: Transportation Map of Parioli

Appendix J: Map of *Municipio II*



## **Benvenuto a Parioli: An Introduction to Our Neighborhood**

### *Preface*

At the beginning of the semester, our studio was divided into four groups of five students. Most of us knew one another at least casually from CRP 100 and 101. Some were intimate friends while others were complete strangers. Given a brief description of these disparate locales, we were then unleashed to discover what we could in five months. Our neighborhood is Parioli, an area tucked between the Villa Borghese and the Tiber and perched on a hilltop whose name derives from the Latin word for pear tree “*peraiolo*.”<sup>1</sup> In this time, our group became intimate both with one another and our study area. The following report is the result of these explorations and investigations.

### *Theoretical Background*

Parioli is unique within Rome. We were told this at the beginning of the semester. It is an enclave of the wealthy in Rome, and this point has been one of the main thrusts of our investigations. The choice of Parioli as a home for the elite seems a natural one from a traditional urbanistic standpoint. The wealthy have long dwelt on hills for a litany of reasons including: protection from flooding (which has been a traditional bane to Rome), pleasant views (such as the one from Mount Parioli), and defendability from invaders and restless plebians (also common problems to the wealthy of Rome).<sup>2</sup>

By the time that most of Parioli was built, the Tiber had been tamed by the walls of the *lungotevere*; the Italian people had largely been pacified from their riotous

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<sup>1</sup> Cigola, Riccardo. *Geography: Rome*. 1999. <[www.italycyberguide.com/Geography/cities/rome/2000/A20.htm](http://www.italycyberguide.com/Geography/cities/rome/2000/A20.htm)>

<sup>2</sup> Pg. 19-20. Abrahamson, Mark. *Urban Enclaves: Identity and Place in America*. New York City: St. Martin's Press, 1992.

tendencies under Imperial and Papal rule, and the city was well defended from foreign invasion by the armed forces of the newly united Kingdom of Italy. Yet the age-old tendencies of the wealthy to build on highpoints were well established, and the symbolism of such settlements was obvious. It seemed appropriate for the wealthy to want to build on Mount Parioli, just as it seemed appropriate for those living below to associate this location with wealth, power, and prestige.<sup>3</sup>

The urban design of Parioli is very different from the rest of Rome, particularly the *centro storico*. One could argue that Parioli was built on largely Hausmannian principles—as discussed in the sixth chapter of *The European City* by Leonardo Benevolo. Benevolo’s commentary on the “Baron’s” Paris concentrates on the separation between public and private spaces. This seems to be a point worthy of investigation in Parioli. Benevolo first conceives of this separation in a very direct manner. He points to the wide, radiating boulevards that Hausmann drew through densely populated areas and claims that this rationalization of the medieval street pattern drew heavy lines between public and private spaces.<sup>4</sup> In central Rome, medieval street patterns are dominant, while this design was scrapped in the design of Parioli and Hausman’s principles applied. Organic street patterns had given residents who lived on them more ownership over the area between the buildings and allowed easier penetration from the street into the private sphere of the house, whereas wide streets essentially cordon off the private sphere from that of the public street. In Parioli, the residential streets are wider than in most of the rest of historic Rome. There are fewer *piazze* and those that exist are often overrun with automobile traffic or parked cars. The parks and gardens are separated from the streets

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<sup>3</sup> Pgs. 79-83. Bagnasco & LeGales. *Cities in Contemporary Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Pg. 3. Benevolo, Leonardo. *The European City*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.

by high fences and gates. This type of separation of public and private is often a symbol of a wealthy community.<sup>5</sup>

The different philosophy guiding the distinction between public and private space in Parioli and in other parts of Rome also lends evidence to the theory that Parioli is the only one of the neighborhoods represented in our class studies which is an urban enclave. According to Abrahamson, the four most important aspects of an enclave are: concentrations of people with similar identifying characteristics, a correlation between social activities and geography, businesses and organizations which cater to the defining group, and pressures which keep those who are not in the select group out of the community.<sup>6</sup> While some neighborhoods in the class study, such as Esquilino, meet some of these requirements, no other study area truly qualifies as an enclave. In the case of the immigrant populations in Esquilino, the first three criteria of an enclave are met, but the fourth- the pressure to keep outsiders away—does not exist as there are many different ethnic and national groups living somewhat intermingled within the area South of Termini. In the case of Parioli, the characteristic which gains one entry into the enclave is wealth. The people there are served *caffè* by uniformed waiters at tables on tree-lined avenues and browse for *macchine* at the Aston-Martin and Alfa Romeo dealerships. The main barrier to entry is the price of real-estate which keeps non-desirables from becoming permanent residents. In addition, poor public transportation and a ring of busy

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<sup>5</sup> Pgs. 169-189. Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Pg. 13. Abrahamson, Mark. *Urban Enclaves: Identity and Place in America*. New York City: St. Martin's Press, 1992.

highways, as well as the wary eyes of suspicious residents, discourage even more casual entry into Parioli by outsiders.<sup>7</sup>

The three points just discussed are important for our group. We were told that Parioli was a wealthy enclave within Rome. With an American bias to our eyes, we entered Parioli expecting this fact to bear itself through flashy displays of wealth such as men in immaculate Armani suits and women in Valentino driving BMW's, Ferrari, and Lamborghini through the tree-lined roads of Parioli. However, there is a vast gulf between these preconceptions of Parioli and the reality that we have observed. In fact, it takes a more discerning eye to tell that Parioli is a wealthy neighborhood. In many parts, the housing stock is not particularly well maintained and commercial space seems lacking. Thus, it is with the more discerning eyes of urbanistic historians and social scientists that we point out attributes of Parioli that demonstrate the socio-economic composition of the neighborhood. The differences between the socio-economic strata represented in Parioli and those of Centocelle, Garbatella, and Esquino are what lead to all the other differences which we have explored this semester, including: housing, public space, transportation, politics, commerce *et cetera*. It was only through thorough analysis that we were able to discover the defining characteristic of Parioli and pinpoint it as the root cause of all of its symptoms. It is with this introduction and theoretical background that we will now begin to discuss our investigations in detail.

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<sup>7</sup> Pgs. 19-23. Ibid.

## Methodology

When we were instructed four months ago to conduct a survey in Parioli, we were largely given free reign to do what we saw fit. Initially we chose to analyze the neighborhood according to parcels in order to collect the most precise information possible on the built environment. To do this, we designed two different survey forms (See Appendices A and B). On the parcel survey (Appendix A) we recorded the parcel number of each building corresponding to an aerial map, the number of stories of the building, its address (optional), uses, and any other pieces of relevant information—such as upkeep. The other form was a street survey (Appendix B) on which we recorded the primary use of the street (residential, commercial, mixed, etc), presence of sidewalks, traffic intensity, ambient noise, greenery, parking details, people in view, and any other germane notes. While we compiled all of the information from the parcel surveys into a spreadsheet, we decided that although the street surveys were a useful tool with which to become initially acquainted to the neighborhood, they were not particularly useful beyond this and have not, therefore, been compiled. These surveys include a listing of all the types of commercial stores and embassies.

We then divided the neighborhood into three sections using major arteries as the boundaries. One pair of researchers each surveyed the two larger sections in the east and west, while the fifth person took the south-central section to analyze. These were not strict lines however. Work was redistributed when we discovered inequalities in the *per capita* parcel load in each sector. After collecting this data, we then entered it into a spreadsheet to create a condensed format from which to analyze the different uses and typographies in the neighborhood.



In addition to surveying physical attributes, we delved deeper into particular topics. We created a list of aspects to address and rearranged and narrowed the list into these five topic groups: people, transportation, commerce, housing and urban design, and a final group containing facilities, public space, and green areas. Each of the five members of the group selected a topic on which to focus. This allowed each individual to do more in-depth research on one topic, which would later be combined to form a picture of Parioli as a whole.

Over the past four months, we have collected information from numerous sources. We carefully gleaned information from class meetings, and we gained a greater understanding of the Italian urban context from meetings with public and private figures in studio and on field trips. The statistics lectures were a twin benefit because they presented us with housing and population data as well as being particularly useful in instructing us in how to more effectively analyze the data, which we had so arduously collected. We also browsed a number of official and un-official websites to which we had been directed by the teaching assistants and Professor Smith. We felt when studying a neighborhood that was foreign to us, it was necessary to hear what some of the people who actually live, work, shop or otherwise spend time there feel about the neighborhood. To do this, several group members created interviews in Italian and conducted them to people in Parioli. An attempt at meeting with officials at the *municipio* resulted in very little. If nothing else, this exercise was instructive regarding the political atmosphere and attitudes towards public service in Parioli. Using various sources and methods from the list above, each member of the group then extracted the information relevant to her/his topic. Finally, the disparate research was amalgamated into a cohesive written analysis

of Parioli including comparisons to other Roman neighborhoods, Rome as a whole, and our own experiences from the American urban context.

## People

As previously mentioned, we were told that Parioli is a very wealthy neighborhood. Although it is an important factor to discuss when investigating the people of a neighborhood, because wealth is the bedrock upon which all of our other investigations are built, it would be inappropriate to discuss it in too much depth here. Instead, we will leave it as an given and tie all of our research on people back to the fact that the people of Parioli are wealthy. When we first approached the neighborhood with this fact in our minds, we entered Parioli with certain expectations about what, and, more importantly for this section, *who* we were to see. This, of course, was caused by our biases derived from our experiences in American urban settings. However, in many ways we were surprised to find such a neighborhood that at times was surprising or even confusing in its demographic composition.

### *Race and Ethnicity*

Until very recently, Italy was a net exporter of people. The phenomenon of mass immigration is a new one, and one that Italians are still struggling to deal with. In part, this is compounded by a European



Union which is continually eroding national autonomy, despite mandates for devolution.<sup>8</sup> For a number of reasons, we came to Parioli expecting it to be ethnically homogeneous. Firstly, Italy, compared to the rest of Western Europe and the United States in particular, is a rather ethnically homogenous nation. Secondly, it is generally accepted that most

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<sup>8</sup> Ginsborg, Paul. *Italy and its Discontents: 1980-2001*. London: Penguin Books, 2001.

immigrants are poor. Thus, when acting on the assumption that Parioli is a wealthy neighborhood, we were inclined to believe that few people from this primarily “poor” group would be found in Parioli. However, even casual observations of the streets revealed that this was not the case. The streets of Parioli are full of people of various ethnic and racial backgrounds. A non-scientific sampling of apartment nameplates reveals a significant number of non-Italian names. The non-Italian names visible were primarily Spanish or Eastern European in origin. However, there are often a considerable number of people of Eastern Asian, Latin-American, Eastern European, and Sub-Saharan African descent visible on the streets. While it is obvious that there are people of various ethnic and racial origins in Parioli, their place in the neighborhood is a more difficult matter to ascertain.

Due to the social prestige of a Parioli address and the comfort and security of the neighborhood, a sizable number of embassies are located there. These include, but are not limited to, Poland, Ecuador, Serbia and Montenegro, Senegal, Bulgaria, Saudi Arabia, and Kenya. The total number of embassies in the study area is eighteen, and there are several others just outside of the survey area.<sup>9</sup> The presence of these embassies and their support staffs may account for a large number of these non-Italian people visible on the streets and some of the names on building nameplates. In an interview, a British resident of Parioli cited the embassies as a reason that a large number of foreigners live there. In addition, a large number of politicians live in Parioli, according to this same interviewee, and this proximity to Italian leaders is likely a reason for diplomats to want to live in

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<sup>9</sup> Parcel Survey Data. Parioli group. Spring 2004.

Parioli.<sup>10</sup> While this probably does not account for a large percentage of non-Italians in Parioli, we account for the rest with two other theories.

According to official *municipio* statistics, *Municipio II* is approximately ten percent *stranieri*.<sup>11</sup> It is difficult to determine with certainty if this number applies to our study area, but there are no compelling reasons to lead us to believe that the statistic for our study area diverges significantly from the *municipio* percentage. Because of the wealthy profile of Parioli, it is probably a magnet for the international business elite who work in Rome. This would be an explanation for many of the foreign residents in Parioli who are not associated with the resident embassies. Members of the international business elite who live in foreign nations often do not stay for extended periods of time, which is in stark contrast to immigrant communities, where the foreigners intend to become both permanent residents and citizens. This permanency breeds civic engagement and an interest in civic affairs. This is partially demonstrated through candidates for the *stranieri* seats on the city council.

While in other communities, particularly Esquilino, there was heavy campaigning for these seats which was visible through an abundance of posters and flyers, there were almost no materials promoting this election in Parioli. Instead of being courted by a rainbow of faces and in a babel of languages on nearly every wall, lightpost, and fence, the people of Parioli are constantly barraged with advertisements for the anti-immigrant and often xenophobic governments of Silvio Berlusconi and Gianfranco Fini. In addition, while these people are non-Italians, the economic policies represented by the existing political structure favors them as members of the elite, and there is little reason

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<sup>10</sup> "Housing Questionnaire." Conducted by Alexandra Bohler. 22 April 2004.

<sup>11</sup> Forum degli Assessorati. Roma. 2004. <[www.forumassessorati.org](http://www.forumassessorati.org)>



for them to become involved in a political system which is already working in their favor. Thus, in a community where wealth is a prerequisite for entry, and where there is little grassroots civic engagement by foreigners, there is evidence for the theory that these foreigners are from the international business elite and are largely only temporary residents who lack the time and incentive with which to enter community politics.

The remainder of foreigners in Parioli is likely people who do not live there but only work within the community, most likely as domestic help. On a number of occasions non-Italians have been observed carrying groceries, assisting elderly Italians in walking, painting buildings and working as porters and gardeners. These could be friendly neighbors helping out someone in need. However it is not unreasonable to hypothesize that they are hired domestic help. This theory is backed by the large number of people on buses leaving the neighborhood around 2:00-5:00 in the afternoon who are of East Asian descent or who are speaking Spanish. This theory is also strengthened by the fact that there are almost no nameplates which bear Eastern-Asian *names* in Parioli; however, there are a large number present there on the streets, in shops and on the public transportation.

### *Age*

Italy is an aging nation; the birth rate is extremely low, and if it were not for immigration, the nation would be losing population.<sup>12</sup> Statistics from the *municipio* show that there is a slight increase in the average age of the people in Parioli and that this increase is higher than the commune as a whole (Appendix C).<sup>13</sup> Our own observations

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<sup>12</sup> Ufficio Comunale di Statistica e Censimento. 1991. Tavola 2/z. Maschi, Femmine, Totale. Population residente per classi di eta e sesso. Il 13° Censimento della Popolazione. Roma, 1996.

<sup>13</sup> Forum degli Assessorati. Roma. 2004. <[www.forumassessorati.org](http://www.forumassessorati.org)>

lead us to believe that this is the case within the study area as well as the rest of the *municipio* due to the large number of senior citizens present on the streets and the relative dearth of both middle-aged and young people. Despite this, Parioli has its own youth-oriented webpage, which features activities for and by the youth of the community, including parties and even a “Miss Parioli” competition.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, the relatively small number of youth who were observed appeared to be almost exclusively Italian. However, these observations were made more difficult by the fact that a very high percentage were either in cars or *motorini* instead of on foot so that it could not be determined what language they were speaking. This leads one to believe (1) that the non-Italians present in the neighborhood work there but do not live there or (2) the non-Italians are only temporary residents, as their children do not go to school in the neighborhood or conduct recreational activities within the neighborhood.

#### *Integration and Sense of Community*

It is difficult to gauge the sense of community and identification with in Parioli. Each of the members of this group has been stopped by Pariolians who either ask “what



are you doing” type questions or offer up directions to students with maps. This leads one to believe that there is a strong sense of community in which outsiders are quickly identified and put under watch. This is an example of a strong

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<sup>14</sup> Pariolini.it. 2004. <[www.pariolini.it](http://www.pariolini.it)>

sense of Jacobs-ian “eyes on the street.”<sup>15</sup> With such a surveillance system in place, crime would naturally be very low. The effectiveness of this surveillance is evidenced by the fact that there are very few police in Parioli, yet there are no signs of any crime beyond graffiti—which unfortunately has a particularly biting racist tone in Parioli.

The confrontational nature of the people of Parioli to outsiders can also instead be attributed to snobbery, and this is the assumption upon which many Italians would work. In fact, teaching assistant Massimo Alluli informed us that a common adjective for a snob is “*pariolini*.” Italian instructor Paolo Bultrini also said that this is a common Roman slang term.<sup>16</sup>

Mark Abrahamson could easily have substituted Parioli for San Francisco’s Nob Hill or Boston’s Beacon Hill when he wrote his seminal work *Urban Enclaves*. The people here are in many ways (wealth, age, and social status) different from the rest of Rome. They strongly identify themselves and their neighborhood with these characteristics, and they are determined to make sure that their neighborhood stays the way it is now by fiercely guarding this identity, reinforcing it, and preventing those who would corrupt it from entering the neighborhood. It is because of this enclave nature that Parioli is one of the most well-defined neighborhoods in Rome.

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<sup>15</sup> Jacobs, Jane. “Eyes on the Street.”

<sup>16</sup> Alluli, Massimo. Personal Interview. 30 April 2004.

## Commerce

Commerce within Parioli is typical of an affluent, dense, residential enclave. The stores, services, and restaurants are clustered around a few main piazzas in a village-like setting. Parioli residents are well served: *Municipio II*, according to the Rome municipal website, has nearly twice the ratio of markets per one-thousand residents as the rest of Rome.<sup>17</sup> There are plentiful commercial resources for the residents of the neighborhood, but commerce is generally limited to the ground floor of residential buildings, or small spaces lining the radial streets. The commercial infrastructure generally does not cater to residents not living outside the neighborhood – there is a dearth of a major shopping district, or large office space. As previously mentioned, the residents of Parioli tend to be wealthier, whiter, and older than the average Roman. Commercial activity in the neighborhood reflects these demographics, clearly specializing for local patrons.

The following will detail five elements to Parioli's commerce. These are office space, retail space, commercial services, food and beverages, and finally lodging. The results from a survey given to neighborhood residents will also be discussed.

### *Office Space*

Aside from a few modernistic, glassy office buildings clustered around Piazza Euclide, significant corporate office space is non-existent. The vast majority of the office space is concentrated in small, service-related businesses such as travel agencies, small bank branches, law offices, doctors, psychiatrists, and other small businesses. These businesses are located around Piazza Euclide, the neighborhood's main nucleus, and line

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<sup>17</sup> Osservatorio sulla condizione sociale della città. <[www.osservatorioRoma.org/db/municipioII/servizi\\_structure/mun\\_II\\_Indici\\_qualita\\_1998.pdf](http://www.osservatorioRoma.org/db/municipioII/servizi_structure/mun_II_Indici_qualita_1998.pdf)>

the main commercial boulevards: Viale Parioli and Viale Bruno Bouzzi. They are also scattered throughout the residential areas, mainly occupying ground floor space in apartment buildings.

Much of the office space reflects the overall theme of “privacy” within the neighborhood. The commercial buildings near Piazza Euclide and lining Via Guidobaldo del Monte are walled and not open to the street. Their function and use is ambiguous to a passerby, and parking is mostly underground. Therefore, these office workers are not integrated into the general streetscape, but instead spend the day walled up in these buildings.

### *Retail*

The second component to neighborhood commercial is retail. The retail within the neighborhood tends to be upscale with pricier items than are found in other areas of the city. The retail fits the neighborhood demographics: that of an older, wealthier, and more conservative shopper. The shops are small and are concentrated in Piazza Euclide, along Viale Parioli, and scattered about smaller side streets. Common are women’s dress shops, full of fashionable suits and dressy outfits, small jewelry stores, menswear, shoe stores, specialty gift items, and florists. Some individual stores clearly cater to the very wealthy, such as the Aston-Martin and Jaguar car dealerships, several Rolex outlets, and high-fashion names such as Gucci, Armani, and Christian Dior, fill the display windows.

Third is a component that is also retail, but which here is separated into another category. These are the “service” establishments that cater directly to the needs of the immediately surrounding residents. These small businesses are located primarily in the ground floors of buildings on residential streets and on the smaller commercial streets



that radiate outward from Piazza Euclide. Some common types of service-oriented commercial are beauty salons, pet grooming and pet care, furniture repair shops, and specialty auto repair shops. Based on the cars being worked on, the type of furniture being fixed, and the groomed poodles in the windows of the pet shops, one can conclude that these are services for the affluent.

### *Food and Beverages*

The fourth component is based around food. This has two subcategories: restaurants, bars, eateries, cafés, and *pasticcerias*, and the second, food markets, grocery stores, *alimentaries*, wine shops, bread shops, and the like. The grocery stores and smaller, specialty food stores are scattered throughout the neighborhood, predominantly inhabiting ground floor locations in apartment buildings on residential streets. The neighborhood is well served by these shops; there is some kind of food store every two or three blocks within the neighborhood.<sup>18</sup> There is one enclosed market in the neighborhood. The market sells produce, meat, fish, baked goods, basic toiletries, and other odds and ends. It is located near the midpoint of the researched area, on Via G. Antonelli. This market is not very different than a produce market, in say, Centocelle – the vendors are a mix of Italians and *stranieri*, and the prices are similar. It is a smaller market, and it is the dressy Parioli



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<sup>18</sup> Parcel Survey Data. Parioli group. Spring 2004.

clientele that sets it apart.

Restaurants in Parioli are small, mostly *ristorantes* or formal dining establishments. They are located on Viale Parioli and scattered about the other radial streets. These *ristorantes* have upscale menus, usually in the 30-50 euro price range for one person. The dining options in Parioli are not very diverse: most of the restaurants are Italian food with a few exceptions on Viale Parioli, such as a California Pizza Kitchen and a Greek Restaurant. However, the neighborhood lacks the ethnic eateries that so characterize other parts of Rome, especially *centro storico* areas such as Esquilino and Trastevere. There are a few less expensive trattorias, but they are certainly not the norm. There are several *pasticcerias* and bakeries. These, too, tend to reflect the demographics. The staff is uniformed, and the selection of pastries is fancier and larger than in an average *pasticceria* in Rome. One, adjacent to Piazza Euclide, has pastries from all over Italy. Chic cafés are another characteristic of Parioli. These line Viale Parioli, especially. At these cafés, one might pay a third more for a cappuccino than one would pay in center Rome, and twice what one would pay in Garbatella (based on price comparisons).<sup>19</sup> The Pariolini sit on the sidewalks, donning their suits and shades, and sip on these pricey coffees along the commercial boulevards.

The fifth and final component of the commercial activity is lodging. Parioli has several hotels although they are almost all small, upscale boutique-style hotels of less than one hundred rooms. The largest, the Grand Ritz, located near Piazza Euclide, has convention facilities and a couple hundred rooms. Others, such as the Duke Hotel on Via Archimede, are small, low-rise, and woven into the surrounding residential

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

neighborhood. There are eighteen embassies within Parioli, which is the main draw for the hotels, according to the front desk staff at the Duke Hotel.<sup>20</sup> The clientele at these hotels is well-dressed in business attire, and rooms are pricey, though similar to the *centro storico*. It is fashionable for a hotel to have a Parioli address, as evident in the advertisements for one hotel, the Hotel Lord Byron: “Tucked away in Parioli, Rome’s most fashionable residential area, this five-star hotel...”<sup>21</sup> The draw of these hotels is the tranquility, greenery, and upscale allure of Parioli as well as its proximity to the Via Veneto, Via Salaria, and Villa Borghese.

A survey was conducted to determine several aspects of commercial activity in the neighborhood. Twenty-five randomly selected people in and around Piazza Euclide were asked questions aimed at determining shopping, commuting, and work patterns within the neighborhood, and also how they felt about the level of commercial services available. The residents questioned ranged in age from young working aged to elderly. The questionnaires were given only to residents that said they did live in the neighborhood.

For the most part, residents responded that they did not remain in the neighborhood to go shopping. “Go shopping” implied more than just picking up some groceries or an odds and ends here and there. It meant *fare la spesa*, or the leisurely weekend shopping that Americans tend to spend at the mall. Sixteen out of twenty-five respondents said that when they go shopping, they have to go to another part of Rome to do so.

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<sup>20</sup> Benedetti, Carmen. Personal Interview. 22 April 2004.

<sup>21</sup> Online advertisement. The Hotel Lord Byron. 30 April 2004.

However, they believed overwhelmingly that the neighborhood does offer a sufficient level of basic commercial services. Twenty-one out of twenty-five responded “yes” that they believed that the services available in Parioli were sufficient. Of the twenty-five people surveyed, fourteen responded that they did indeed work. This number is not surprising based on Parioli’s higher than average percentage of elderly, and stay at home moms. Of those fourteen, only five responded that they worked in Parioli. This indicates that the majority of those who live in the neighborhood work in another part of Rome, and commute out in the morning.

The final question asked referred to whether or not the respondent felt that prices in the neighborhood were in general more expensive, about the same, or less expensive, than in Rome as a whole. Eleven out of twenty-five residents responded that prices were about the same. Nine responded that they believed prices to be more expensive. Only five responded that they believed Parioli prices were less expensive than in Rome as a whole.

Some conclusions based on four months of observation and the survey are that although Parioli’s commercial activities suit the day-to-day needs of its wealthy residents, there is little to no usable and vibrant commercial space. There is no “shopping district.” There is no grand piazza where people can congregate, surrounded by shops and restaurants. And there is little to no reason that non-residents, from other parts of Rome would want to go to Parioli to shop, do business, or eat. The shops and restaurants are exclusive, often hidden from view, and sometimes hidden within hotels. As the neighborhood developed, a cohesive commercial center was never established. Piazza Euclide is the closest thing to it, but it is not pedestrian friendly. The concert halls,

opened in 2001, are a huge public space, attracting thousands of concert and theatergoers to the neighborhood every weekend. However, these concert halls are physically separated from the matrix of offices and retail in the neighborhood, and very little commercial space has been integrated into the project or the surrounding streetscape. In a commercial sense, as well as in a residential sense, Parioli is an enclave.



## Housing and Urban Design

Parioli has a rather short history compared to the rest of Rome. Before the start of 1900, the neighborhood was made up of villas with surrounding gardens. Some of these villas still exist, such as Villa Ella and Villa Glori. In the early 1900s, additional homes and commercial areas were constructed within these villas, removing gardens, and dividing *palazzi* into multi-family dwellings.<sup>22</sup> The 1909 Plan anticipated Parioli to be an area of high quality houses. Later, the 1931 Plan allowed the construction of more *palazzi* with more stories, thereby increasing the density without changing the street plan.<sup>23</sup>

These changes relate to Ginsborg's comment about a trend of the Italian bourgeoisie. He states that there was no single city center where the rich were concentrated due to the geographic dispersion of Italian bourgeoisie. However, there were clear patterns of taste and location.<sup>24</sup> Parioli is an example, situated away from the city center and keeping a certain character of wealth in this new location. This trend is apparent in the transformation of a number of European cities in the late 1800s, which included overbuilding and high densities.<sup>25</sup> The prices in Parioli stayed high, and the income class living there remained the same.<sup>26</sup>

Benevolo describes how during the Middle Ages, European cities were designed to be condensed, with the most sought-after locations closest to the center.<sup>27</sup> This mentality remains today, which is one of the primary differences between European and

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<sup>22</sup> Volante, Stefano. Lecture. 5 Feb. 2004.

<sup>23</sup> Assessorati di Roma. Meeting in EUR. 15 March 2004.

<sup>24</sup> Pg. 42. Ginsborg, Paul. *Italy and its Discontents: 1980-2001*. London: Penguin Books, 2001.

<sup>25</sup> Pg. 176. Benevolo, Leonardo. *The European City*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.

<sup>26</sup> Assessorati di Roma. Meeting in EUR. 15 March 2004.

<sup>27</sup> Pg. 40. Benevolo, Leonardo. *The European City*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.

American cities. The historic city center of Rome is the most costly to live in. The wealthiest area within Rome is a wedge whose point is in the center of the city and then extends out to the north a short distance.<sup>28</sup> Parioli lies within this wedge.

Parioli is located among hills to the north of the *Centro Storico*. This topography is a likely reason for the urban design pattern that exists. The primary commercial roads fall between the hills. Residential areas with minimal commercial presence sit primarily on the hills along curving streets. There are also occasional pedestrian staircases that connect the main streets to the streets on the

hills. Residential streets are usually lined with narrow sidewalks and parked cars on both sides. Oftentimes there is underground parking below the apartment buildings, and there are some areas with garages in front, accessible directly from the street. Some



residents have one parking spot for their apartment, while others lacked a designated space. Those with a parking space often own additional cars and a moped which they then must park on the street. (Four interviewees had one spot and three relied solely on the streets.)<sup>29</sup>

From our parcel surveys, we noticed other patterns present in the design elements of the housing. From a sample of 525 buildings, the average building height was 4.82 stories.<sup>30</sup> Top stories often contained partial roof terraces with living spaces set back

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<sup>28</sup> Pg. 141. *Annuario Statistico 2000*.

<sup>29</sup> "Housing Questionnaire." Conducted by Alexandra Bohler. 22 April 2004.

<sup>30</sup> Parcel Survey Data. Parioli group. Spring 2004.

from the edge, making the buildings appear to be slightly shorter from the street. The terraces give the residents a private area that may function like yards in the U.S.

The buildings themselves have very diverse designs. Some have curving walls, others have repetitive indentations, creating a layered look, and balconies are abundant. Typically one side of a street follows the same pattern. For example, all the buildings may come right up to the sidewalk, or they may all be set back ten yards with a wall in front.

The presence of greenery around the homes is notable. There appears to be a relatively large amount of greenery when compared to other parts of Rome, and this was confirmed when surveys were conducted. The most common response when asked what characteristics make Parioli different from the rest of Rome was the presence of greenery.<sup>31</sup> It is interesting to note that much of it is private. Trees and brush can be seen peering over walls or as part of a fence. These walls or brush-covered fences rise above one's head and are placed at the edge of the narrow sidewalks, creating an intimidating boundary for pedestrians. They are interrupted by gates (often automatic) for cars and pedestrians to enter their homes and driveways. These are numerous, which seem to be an aspect of wealth. Gated communities in the United States are indicators of wealth. These communities bar themselves off from the rest of the world, giving them a sense of security. On the other hand, Parioli residents often have security well-displayed, either with these overbearing walls and gates, warnings about dogs, or security cameras. This has the same function as gated communities in the United States.

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<sup>31</sup> "Housing Questionnaire." Conducted by Alexandra Bohler. 22 April 2004.

The *Annuario Statistico 2000* gives the minimum and maximum values of apartments (*per suddivisione toponomastica*) both at the beginning and end of the year. This table shows values in selected regions within Rome, which have been roughly converted to euros from lire (per square meter) by dividing by 2000.

Values of apartments *per suddivisione toponomastica* (per m<sup>2</sup>)<sup>32</sup>

	Jan 1, 2000		Dec 31, 2000	
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
Parioli (quartiere)	1,600	3,200	2,000	3,500
Esquilino (rione)	900	2,250	1,250	2,350
Trastevere (rione)	1,400	2,500	1,800	2,600
Testaccio (rione)	1,200	2,200	1,550	2,300
Campo Marzio (rione)	2,000	4,050	2,650	4,250

Parioli is the second most expensive of the thirty-five *quartieri*, after Pinciano (located nearby). However, there are many other comparable *rioni* with similar values, including Campo Marzio, Sant' Angelo, and Trevi, all of which are located in the historic center. Esquilino (and Castro Pretorio) are the two cheapest *rioni*.

Although the most up-to-date statistics were not available, it is still important to look at available statistics to detect possible trends and make comparisons to the rest of the city of Rome (See Appendix D). The percent of vacant housing units has decreased to only 6.7% in 1991 from 14.9% in 1981. However, the percentage of vacant housing used for work has increased from 7% to 20.2% between 1981 and 1991.<sup>33</sup> This could mean that people might actually live and work within Parioli, which was evidenced in our

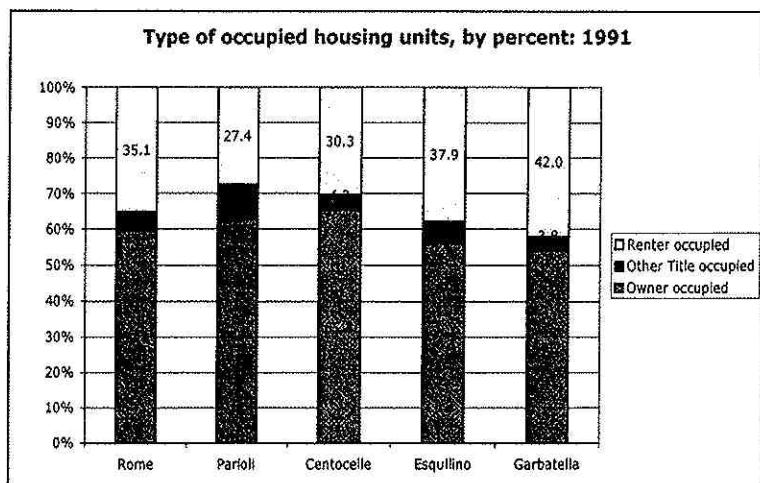
<sup>32</sup> Pg. 141. *Annuario Statistico 2000*.

<sup>33</sup> Ufficio Comunale di Statistica e Censimento. 1991. Tavola 17/z. Abitazioni non occupate per motivo della non occupazione e disponibilita. Il 13° Censimento della Popolazione. Roma, 1996.

questionnaires<sup>34</sup> and in the presence of offices listed on the buzzers of residential buildings.

When compared to the rest of Rome, Parioli has a smaller percentage of vacant housing units (6.7% versus 11.6% in Rome in 1991), and of those that are vacant, units used for vacation and for work have increased since 1981. Of our course's four study areas, only Garbatella has a lower vacancy rate (3.7%) and all but Centocelle have decreased in vacancy from ten years prior, despite the slight increase in Rome.<sup>35</sup> It is to be expected that Parioli has a low vacancy rate considering its wealth. Wealthy areas are typically in higher demand, and vacancies reflect an undesirable area. Among these neighborhoods, vacancy use varies. Of the vacant units in Centocelle and Garbatella, over 65% are for rent and sale. This is the case for only 14% in Parioli and 24% in Esquilino.<sup>36</sup>

Looking instead at occupied housing, one would likely imagine that Parioli would have a high owner-occupied figure because of its greater wealth (see graph). Although the rate of 62.8% owner-occupied is slightly higher than all of Rome (59.4%), Centocelle has an even higher rate of 65.4%. However, these statistics



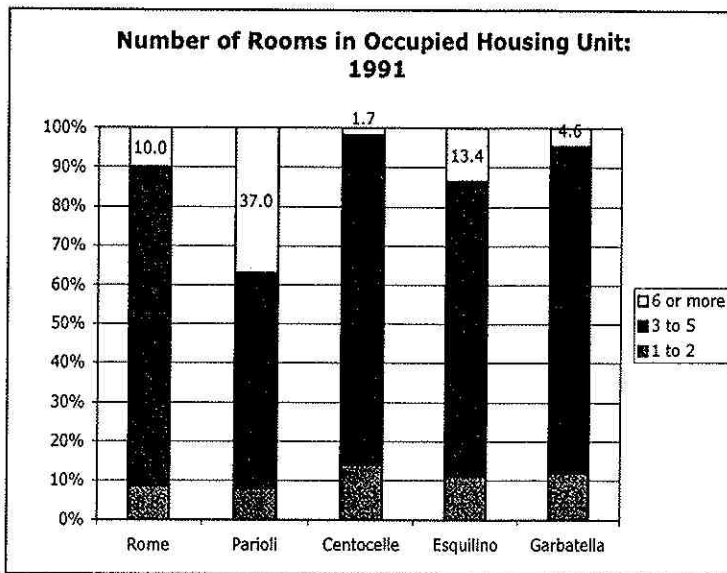
<sup>34</sup> "Commercial Questionnaire." Conducted by Jason Luger. 22 April 2004.

<sup>35</sup> Ufficio Comunale di Statistica e Censimento. 1991. Tavola 17/z. Abitazioni non occupate per motivo della non occupazione e disponibilita. Il 13° Censimento della Popolazione. Roma, 1996.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

may appear skewed because Parioli has the highest Other Title occupied rate of 9.8% which is 4-5% higher than the other four neighborhoods and Rome as a whole. This may be due to the presence of embassies and/or office uses. Parioli has undergone a similar trend as Rome with decreasing renters and increasing owners between the years 1981 and 1991.<sup>37</sup>

There are also structural differences that reflect the wealth in Parioli. Parioli has more rooms per housing unit than the other three neighborhoods and Rome as a whole.



(see graph) In 1991, 37% of the housing units had six or more rooms, compared to 10% in Rome, giving Parioli a location quotient of 3.71. Esquillino is the next highest at 13.4%. Parioli has the lowest percentage in the other two categories of 3 to 5

rooms (55%) and 1 to 2 rooms (8.1%), the latter of which Centocelle has the highest percentage of 14.3%.<sup>38</sup>

As mentioned earlier, plans initially envisioned Parioli as a place for high quality housing. The introduction of the 1909 and 1931 plans probably contributed to the fact that 46.1% of the housing structures were built between 1919 and 1945. The other half of

<sup>37</sup> Ufficio Comunale di Statistica e Censimento. 1991. Tavola 17/z. Abitazioni non occupate per motivo della non occupazione e disponibilita. Il 13° Censimento della Popolazione. Roma, 1996.

<sup>38</sup> Ufficio Comunale di Statistica e Censimento. 1991. Tavola 13/z. Abitazioni occupate, famiglie e componenti per numero di stanza. Il 13° Censimento della Popolazione. Roma, 1996.

the structures (46.2%) were built between 1946 and 1960. This makes a housing stock that is older than Rome, but Esquilino is by far the oldest of our study areas with over 75% of their structures built before 1919.<sup>39</sup>

The existence of Parioli's wealth seems to have been present from the first day this neighborhood was conceived in the early 1900s. The past one hundred years has seen little change in terms of income distribution, unlike Esquilino for example. Esquilino transformed from an upper class area to an immigrant community<sup>40</sup> with the cheapest apartment values of all the *rioni*.<sup>41</sup> This transformation does not seem likely to happen in Parioli anytime soon. The housing values seem to be on the rise.<sup>42</sup> Parioli was initially envisioned for upper-middle class housing and that is how it will likely stay for many years to come.

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<sup>39</sup>Ufficio Comunale di Statistica e Censimento. 1991. Tavola 10/z. Abitazioni occupate e non occupate per epoca di costruzione. Il 13° Censimento della Popolazione. Roma, 1996.

<sup>40</sup> Esquilino Neighborhood Group. Class tour. 26 April 2004.

<sup>41</sup> Pg. 141. *Annuario Statistico 2000*.

<sup>42</sup> "Housing Questionnaire." Conducted by Alexandra Bohler. 22 April 2004.

## **Transportation**

Given a description of Parioli as a conservatively-governed, affluent enclave, many urban planners would hypothesize that private transport is prevalent and the demand for public transit is low or non-existent. While the presumption of high automobile use is correct, through our research we have concluded that there is a significant demand for public transportation in Parioli – a demand which has historically gone unnoticed and/or ignored. In short, public transportation in Parioli can be summarized in the words of an elderly resident. While standing at a bus stop on Viale Bruno Buozzi she remarked, “The problem with transportation in Parioli is that no one thinks the residents use it, but look at me –I use it.” This section will outline our study of transportation. It will present our findings, compare public transit in Parioli to other neighborhoods, and provide an interpretation of our findings.

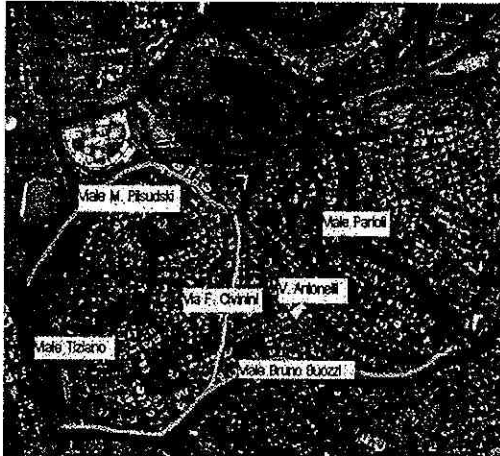
### *The Process*

Analyses of transportation were conducted in three areas that we called the *three P's*: pedestrian, public, and private. Private transport included cars, motorcycles, mopeds, and chauffeured transport (taxis, limousines, etc). Modes of public transit were defined as government-provided bus, tram, and metro service. After an enumeration of transit services, a survey of people in the community was conducted. In total, twenty-two interviews were completed. The principle objectives were to assess the level of use and satisfaction with transit services. Following this survey, a comparison of public transit services between Parioli and three other Roman neighborhoods was performed. We will begin with a brief sketch of mobility patterns within the enclave.



## Observations

Vehicular and pedestrian movement is primarily concentrated on six streets - three of which act as physical boundaries between the community and the rest of *Municipio II*. In addition to serving as boundary lines and major thoroughfares, segments of these roads traverse the densest commercial and retail zones in the enclave. Much of



the remaining street system is residential in nature. (See figure at left.) Pedestrian mobility patterns are similar to the patterns of automobile traffic. In general, traffic is concentrated on the major thoroughfares with minimal congestion in residential areas, but increasing slightly near

areas that border commercial and retail zones. As mentioned in the housing section, some residential districts are located on hills. These elevated districts are accessible to automobiles that traverse the curving landscape and to pedestrians by roadways and public (and sometimes private) staircases.

Public transit options appear to be limited. There are seven bus lines that run along the principle thoroughfares, but rarely intersect residential districts (see figure at right). Although they are limited in hours and frequency, the bus lines provide connections to many of the city's major transit centers.



The community is served by one tram, the Line FM, which stops in Piazza Euclide. There are no subterranean metros that immediately serve the community.

Private transport in Parioli is prevalent. An observation of residential and commercial streets will suggest that automobile ownership is high, perhaps higher than average. Triple layered parking surrounded by *motorini* is common on many of the major corridors. Sadly, residential streets often resemble parking lots rather than axes of mobility. Cars often outnumber people in some of the residential *piazze*. This problem is not specific to Parioli. Parioli, however, does have several subterranean parking structures. Many are privately operated and charge both monthly and hourly rates. Nevertheless, the existence of underground parking structures does not alleviate the abundance of cars parked on the streets in Parioli. Additionally, we have noticed that the presence of *motorini* is low during working hours, but increases around two to five in the evening when most Romans return home.

The above observations provide visual evidence that our presumption of high automobile use is correct. More concrete evidence arose after interviews within the neighborhood. We were interested in discovering if the level of automobile use has a correlation to the extent and quality of public transit. As we embarked on this task, two theories dominated our thoughts.

We knew that during the early twentieth century, while most European countries were developing integrated public transit systems, Italy was developing plans for a broad network of national highways.<sup>43</sup> First, we questioned whether Italy's delayed development of an integrated public transit system had an influence on transit in Parioli.

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<sup>43</sup> Pgs. 14 & 83-85. Ginsborg, Paul. *Italy and its Discontents: 1980-2001*. London: Penguin Books, 2001.

Secondly, we hypothesized that Pariolians choose private methods of mobility because their willingness (ability) to pay for the freedom of private transport is greater than those who use public transit.

### *Neighborhood Survey*

Of those surveyed, 91% of those surveyed used some form of private transportation, 63% were dissatisfied with public transportation in Parioli, and 72% offered suggestions on how transit services could be augmented and/or improved.<sup>44</sup> The comments ranged in scope from a need for increased bus service, traffic concerns, direct metro line for the periphery, to the cleanliness of public transit. A full schedule of the results from this study can be found in Appendix E. Most notable was a plethora of requests that called for an increase in the frequency of transit services. Comments for increased service from non-residents who commute frequently for work or physician visits were not surprising, but statements from residents suggested that a portion of Pariolians use and would like better services in their community. An English translation of the survey can be seen below.

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<sup>44</sup> "Transportation Questionnaire." Conducted by Jovan Grogan. 22 April 2004.

**Transportation Satisfaction Survey (Parioli)**

**1 Do you live and/or work in Parioli?**

*\_Live      \_Work      \_Both*

**2 How do you commute within and travel outside of Parioli?**

*\_Car      \_Motorino      \_Bus      \_Tram      \_Taxi*  
*\_Metro      \_Walk      Other \_\_\_\_\_*

**3 If you use public transportation (buses, trams, or railways) to travel within or outside of Parioli, how frequently do you use them per week?**

*Use per week:      \_16+      \_15-11      \_10-6      \_5-1*

**4 Whether or not you use public transportation, are you satisfied with the service that is provided in Parioli?**

*\_Extremely Satisfied      \_Satisfied*  
*\_Barely Satisfied      \_Not Satisfied*

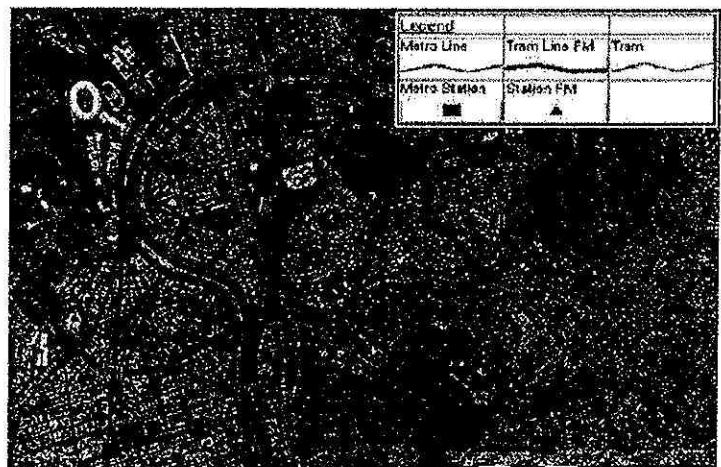
**5 Should transportation options be expanded in Parioli? If so, what should be added?**

*\_Yes      \_No*

*Additions: \_\_\_\_\_*

*Public Transit Comparison*

In comparison to three other Roman neighborhoods studied, (Centocelle, Garbatella, and Esquilino), the transit network of Parioli is lacking system-wide integration within Rome's ATAC<sup>45</sup>



<sup>45</sup> ATAC - Agenzia dei Trasporti Autoferrotranviari del Comune is the City of Rome's transit agency which collectively operates all public transit in the city/metropolitan area (buses, trams, and metro rails).

service. For example, Garbetella, Centocelle, and Esquilino each have at least one central transportation hub where buses, trams, and/or metros converge, while Parioli has none. Centocelle, located nearly an hour outside of the *Centro Storico* is serviced by several trams, a sizable network of buses, and there are plans for a third metro line (C). Garbetella has three metro stations. Esquilino might be the best public transit served community in Italy. In addition to its broad network of buses and trams, the community is bordered by the preeminent transportation hub in Rome, *Stazione Termini*. *Termini* is home to nearly every mode of communal transport: buses, trams, metro rails, taxis, and surface trains.

The culminating insight from our transportation research suggests that there is a sizable demand for more effective and efficient public transit in Parioli. This demand exists due to the needs of non-residents and Pariolians. The belief that more public transit is needed may represent a minority opinion among residents of the enclave. Nevertheless, the transit needs of residents and non-residents are valid concerns that necessitate action. In an ideal world, every citizen of every community would advocate for the existence of efficient public transportation and the government would have the funds to supply it. "Public transport offers a guaranteed service which is valued also by those who do not normally use it."<sup>46</sup> People who do not use public transport benefit from the value of potential use and a decrease in street congestion. Until the majority of Pariolians realize this, public transit in the enclave will forever operate at the margins of effectiveness.

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<sup>46</sup> Roson, Roberto. *Social Cost Pricing when Public Transport is an Option Value*. Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei Working Paper No. 67.98. November 1998.

## Facilities and Services

The category of facilities and services can encompass a seemingly endless variety of things. In Parioli, it is particularly important to distinguish between private facilities and public ones, while at the same time understanding that most residents will be able to make use of the private ones, due to their high-income status. From an American perspective, one assumes that wealthier neighborhoods have higher levels of public services and are also better served by market forces in the way of a strong commercial presence. This is different in Italy because the funding for public goods is provided from a more centralized entity.

The data in the tables shown below is from the *Municipio* level and thus the figures reflect the residents of *Municipio II* in comparison with the facilities and services available for the city as a whole. For this list of facilities, using *municipio* data makes sense because it traces a larger geographic area for people in our neighborhood to go. In the Figure below, the statistics for some representative public services and facilities are shown in comparison with those of Rome. Across the board, the services available in *Municipio II* are higher, but not by significant amounts, as shown by their location quotients.

Figure: Public Facilities and Services for *Municipio II* vs. Rome<sup>47</sup>

	Municipio II		Rome		Location Quotients
	Number	Number/10,000 Residents	Number	Number/10,000 residents	
Post Offices	11	0.88	172	0.61	1.45
Police Stations	2	0.16	40	0.14	1.13
Carabinieri Stations	4	0.32	84	0.30	1.08
Vigili Urbani	231	18.55	4823	17.13	1.08
Libraries	2	0.16	26	0.09	1.74

<sup>47</sup><[www.osservatorioroma.org/db/Municipio\\_II/servizi\\_strutture/Mun\\_II\\_Servizi\\_Strutture\\_1998.pdf](http://www.osservatorioroma.org/db/Municipio_II/servizi_strutture/Mun_II_Servizi_Strutture_1998.pdf)>

Larger differences in services available are visible when those being analyzed are open to market forces. The disparities shown in the categories of theatres, cinema rooms, and tennis courts reflect this contrast in their location quotients. In addition, the data from which these tables were constructed does not take into account the *Parco Della Musica*, completed in 2002, which surely adds to the total number of theatres in the *Municipio*. The Figure below compares the leisure time facilities of *Municipio II* with those of Rome as a whole.

Figure: Leisure Time Facilities for *Municipio II* vs. Rome<sup>48</sup>

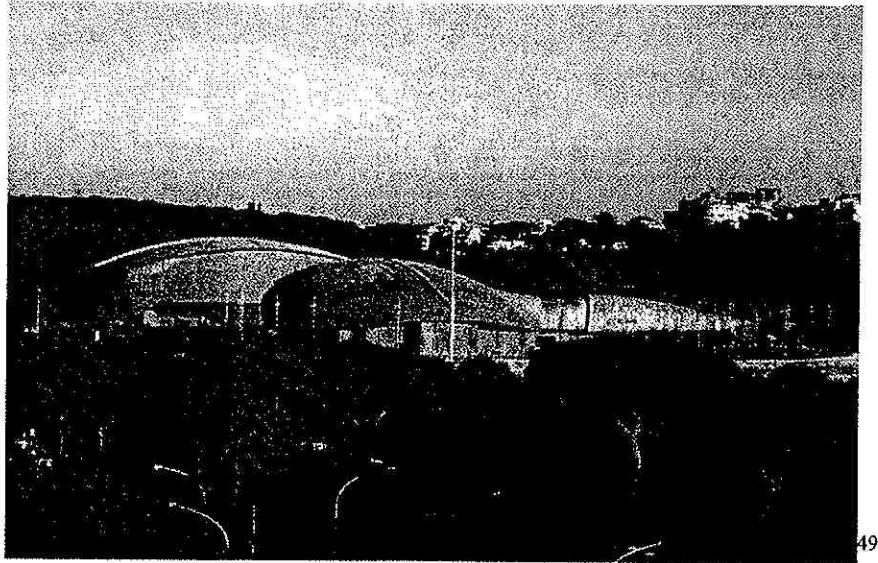
	Municipio II		Rome		Location Quotients
	Number	Number/10,000 Residents	Number	Number/10,000 residents	
Theatres	7	0.56	76	0.27	2.08
Cinema Rooms	19	1.53	85	0.30	5.05
Tennis Courts	109	8.76	979	3.48	2.52
Soccer Fields	33	2.65	730	2.59	1.02
Bocce Courts	23	1.85	313	1.11	1.66
Pools and Gyms	76	6.10	1308	4.65	1.31

The high number of spaces that accommodate leisure time activities suggests that residents of *Municipio II* have time and money to spend on leisure. It also might provide some hints as to how they use other spaces, such as public space and green space.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

*Facility Focus: Parco Della Musica (see picture)*



The *Auditorium* sitting in the northwest corner of our study area have been triumphed as the long-awaited home for the *Accademia Musicale di Santa Cecilia* and a modern architectural masterpiece by the Genovese architect Renzo Piano. The last time the *Accademia* had a permanent concert space was in 1936, when it inhabited an art-nouveau hall located atop the mausoleum of Augustus.

The Auditorium was eventually placed in its current location mainly because the city already owned the 55,000 square meter parking lot that used to stand in its place. The Auditorium project was included in *Roma DueMila*, a program designed to spruce up the city for the year 2000 Jubilee. What is most interesting for the purposes of our study is not the history or the decision-making process that plunked the Auditoriums down next to Parioli, but rather, its current relationship with the neighborhood.

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<sup>49</sup> Auditorium Parco della Musica. < <http://www.musicaperroma.it/content.asp?L=1&IdMen=257>>



While the website of the Auditoriums and numerous articles claim that “urban design took precedence over architectural object” and that “In envisioning his City of Music, he [Piano] ranked Rome as high as the music.”<sup>50</sup> To an astute observer, the Auditorium is not a “knuckle” connecting Parioli, the Villa Glori Park, and the Flaminia neighborhood, but a barrier that separates the enclave of Parioli from the developing area of Flaminia.

The Auditorium opens only to cars on the Parioli side and solely to pedestrians on the Flaminia side, segregating the two populations of visitors. While a bookstore, an art gallery, and a café front the northern side of the complex, the southern side is marked by a high metal fence, parking garage entrances, the brick facades of dressing rooms, and private security guards. The plans show that there will be an entrance to the park backing the auditorium from the Parioli side, but it is not visible at this point. Even with this entrance, the physical design still creates an obstruction between places.

Ten surveys were conducted in order to gauge the effects of the Auditorium on Parioli. This sample was not large enough to generate charts or do statistical analysis, but it did yield some interesting information. None of the respondents expressed negative feelings about the presence of the auditorium in their place of work or residence. However, only two out of the ten people were enthusiastic about its location in the neighborhood, and none of the respondents thought that the Auditorium had contributed to a significant increase in activity in Parioli. One resident was slightly miffed that as a

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<sup>50</sup> Joseph Giovanni, “With the City of Music in Rome, Renzo Piano Sets Out to Transform Frayed Urban Fabric into New ‘Connective Tissue’.” *Architectural Record*. October 2003, Volume 191 Issue 10.

Parioli resident, he had to drive his car to get there.<sup>51</sup> A couple of people who work in Parioli did not even know that the Auditorium is located there.

The attitudes of the people interviewed and the physical orientation of the complex in space point towards a theme that arose numerous times throughout our research about Parioli. While the neighborhood sits just north of the crowded center of Rome, it keeps its identity as separate, even with the arrival of a major, citywide attraction right next door.

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<sup>51</sup> "Facilities Questionnaire." Conducted by Louis Lipner. 22 April 2004.

## Green Space

Rome is not a city lacking in green space. As Silvano Susi, president of ACER, an organization that represents the interests of builders in Rome said, “Rome is a city with a preservationist mentality.”<sup>52</sup> This mindset has led the city preserve many of its natural areas. In 1997, according to the *Piano delle Certezze* (Plan of Certainty), 64% of the vast territory of Rome was handed over to Roma Natura, an organization that subjects this area to strict environmental regulations.<sup>53</sup>

On a macro level, this number of 64% is an astounding one. However, to truly understand the functions and uses of these areas, they must be evaluated on a localized level. *Municipio II* is well endowed with green space, with 12.95 square meters of public green space per inhabitant. This figure is more easily understood when compared to the same statistic given for the entire city, 8.96 square meters.<sup>54</sup> There are a couple of very large parks which bring *Municipio II*'s figure well above that of the city. The *Municipio* includes the Villa Borghese, which is not only a large and attractive green space, but also encompasses a number of notable museums and a zoo. In addition, the Villa Ada Park, which sits only five blocks away from the eastern border of Parioli, is one of the largest parks in Rome, roughly a third larger in area than the Villa Borghese.

Parioli itself contains a number of interesting green spaces. There is an archeological site on Via Pietro Antonio Micheli, a large park at the northern edge of the neighborhood named Villa Glori, a beautiful park on Via Paolo Bartolini, and a small rectangular park in Piazzale Don Giovanni Minzoni. It is interesting to note that all of

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<sup>52</sup> Susi, Silvano. Lecture. 23 Feb. 2004.

<sup>53</sup> RomaNatura. I parchi naturali di Roma. 2004. <[www.romanatura.roma.it](http://www.romanatura.roma.it)>

<sup>54</sup> Indici di Qualita della Vita. 2004. <[www.osservatorioroma.org/db/Municipio\\_II/servizi\\_strutture/Mun\\_II\\_Servizi\\_Strutture\\_1998.pdf](http://www.osservatorioroma.org/db/Municipio_II/servizi_strutture/Mun_II_Servizi_Strutture_1998.pdf)>

these spaces lie either on or west of the central axis that runs down the middle of the neighborhood. Short descriptions of three of these green spaces are listed below.

*Piazzale Don Giovanni Minzoni* (see picture)

This green *piazzale* is on Viale Bruno Buozzi, the street that outlines the southern edge of our study area. It provides a shady, grassy area and a number of benches for people to sit on.



*Via Paolo Bartolini*



This park that sits atop *Monte Parioli* on the western edge of the study area seems inaccessible to the general population for a number of reasons. First, it sits atop a steep hill and to get to the public entrance,

one must pass a number of private streets. Second, it does not have a name. A park with a large, tree-lined, rectangular grassy space, a café with outdoor seating, a playground for children, and excellent views of the Vatican and other hills to the West, seems as if it

would be a destination for many. Instead it takes the name of a regular street. Additionally, for a large park, it has only one public entrance (many of the apartment buildings along the eastern edge of the park have private entrances).

### *Villa Glori*

This large, heavily shaded park sits at the northern edge of our study area. It provides a playground, jogging paths, and a number of pleasant sitting areas.

## Public Space

Evaluating the use of public spaces in a neighborhood is a difficult task. It is not enough to examine the formal *piazze* and parks because public space also encompasses streets and sidewalks. Our primary hypothesis about Parioli was that its residents would not display a strong need for vibrant public spaces, as much of their lives take place in private spaces, such as theatres, movie houses, tennis clubs, and their comfortable homes. This hypothesis did not account for the people who go to Parioli to work every day, who do make strong use of public spaces on lunch breaks and after work when the weather is nice. *Piazza Euclide*, the largest piazza in our study area, provides an interesting case study and a look into the use of public space in Parioli.

### *Piazza Euclide*

This *piazza*, located adjacent to the *Chiesa dell' immacolata cuore di Maria*, sits in the geographical center of our study area. It is often filled with multiple rows of cars and does not provide for any official seating area or gathering point; however, it remains a point of confluence for the neighborhood. The exit from the FM rail line is on the southern edge of the *piazza*, ensuring a relatively constant flow of pedestrians. The *piazza* also has a number of attributes that are representative of Parioli life. There is a hotel, a small gas station, a chain restaurant, and a number of *bars*. The steps of the church serve as the only available place for people to sit and rest, other than the seats outside of the numerous cafes.

## **Conclusion**

Neighborhoods often morph over time, shaped by the forces of urban change. Based on our four months of observation and study, we found Parioli to be more or less locked in place and time, withstanding the redefinition that has taken place elsewhere in Rome. In 1920, its winding boulevards and green hills were traversed by the well-dressed Roman bourgeoisie. Today, a similar crowd frequents the avenues. Though cell phones and sleek cars represent a modern era, the mindset and demographics of the neighborhood mirror the original intentions of the founders of the enclave.

The exclusivity and symbolic isolation has been maintained over the decades by a populace that closely monitors outsiders, a lack of inroads into the established commercial infrastructure, a housing stock that remains expensive, a transportation system that emphasizes private uses, and public space that has failed to truly serve the public. It is unusual for such an enclave to exist within the greater context of a city shaped by a history of providing social equality.

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