

THE RESIDENTIAL SETTLEMENT OF BANGLADESHIS IN ITALY: THE CASE OF ROME

di Oliviero Casacchia, Luisa Natale, Adriana Santacroce e Francesco G. Truglia

1. Introduction

Italy's immigration pattern shows a wide range of countries of origin. This diversity has led to a fairly settled situation characterized not so much by concentrations of mono-national groups¹ as, rather, by “places of copresence”, areas in which various different communities change their daily routines to adapt to the residential context.² The aim of this research is to analyze the spatial distribution model of the Bangladeshi community, which has reached a notable level of segregation in certain Italian cities (Genoa, Palermo, Catania), although decidedly lower than the levels observed – for example – in British cities.³ The analysis was carried out in a context of particular importance for the Bangladeshi community, namely Rome, a city that has since the 1980s been receiving ample flows of Bangladeshis.

According to the official sources,⁴ the number of Bangladeshi residents in Italy has risen from 27,356 at the beginning of 2004 to about 140,000 by January 1st 2019 (Table 1), with a growth rate of 400%, far higher than that of the foreign population as a whole resident in Italy. Thus, while the Bangladeshis had accounted for 1.4% of the total of foreigners in Italy, by 2019 the proportion had doubled (2.7%).

¹ See P. Luigi Crosta, A. Mariotto, A. Tosi, *Immigrati, territorio e politiche urbane. Il caso italiano*, Agenzia romana per il Giubileo, Roma, Egea, 2000; E. Tanzi, *Luoghi di integrazione e convivenza*, Milano, Egea, 2008.

² See A. Mubi Brighenti, *Visuale, Visibile*, «Etnografico, Etnografia e ricerca qualitativa», I, 2008, 1, pp. 91-114.

³ See A. Cangiano, *Mapping of Race and Poverty in Birmingham* ESRC Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, 2007, 9, pp. 397- 408; S. Dorling, P. Rees, *A Nation Still Dividing: the British census and social polarisation 1971-2001*, «Environment and Planning», XXXV, 2005, pp. 1287-1313; K. Laura Farley, *Patterns and trends in ethnic residential segregation in England, 1991-2001: a quantitative and qualitative investigation*, Durham theses, Durham University, 2010. Available at Durham E-Theses Online: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/493/>; J. Forrest, R. Johnston, M. Poulsen, *Are there Ethnic Enclaves/Ghettos in English Cities?*, «Urban Studies», XXXIX, 2002, 4, pp. 591-618; J. Forrest, R. Johnston, M. Poulsen, *Increasing Diversity Within Increasing Diversity: the Changing Ethnic Composition of London's Neighbourhoods, 2001-2011*, «Population Space and Place», XXI, 2015, 1, pp. 38-53.

⁴ See the official site <http://www.demo.istat.it> which provides figures on the various communities by sex for each city in the space showing demographic balances of the resident populations of foreign citizens.

Table 1. *Bangladeshis and total foreigners resident in cities in Italy per 100 total residents. 2004 and 2019. As of January 1.*

Cities	2004		2019	
	Bangladeshis	Foreigners	Bangladeshis	Foreigners
Total Italy	27,356	1,990,159	139,953	5,255,503
% Rome	13.7%	6.2%	22.7%	7.3%
% Milan	4.7%	7.2%	6.6%	5.1%
% Venice	4.5%	0.5%	4.7%	0.7%
% Palermo	7.3%	0.6%	3.8%	0.5%
% Naples	0.2%	0.5%	1.3%	1.1%
Total 5 cities	30.5%	15.1%	39.2%	14.7%

Source: Istat, <http://www.demo.istat.it>

In the period under observation, as compared with an overall increase in the size of the foreign population in Italy of one and a half times, the number of Bangladeshi citizens rose by more than five times.

Their growth rate is even higher than that of the community from Southeast Asia: between 2004 and 2019 the Pakistani community had quadrupled, the number of Indians had increased by just over three times, while the community from Sri Lanka had shown growth in line with that of the foreign population as a whole (Table 2). The result of this extraordinary dynamic is that the Bangladeshi community in Italy now takes the eighth position amongst the most numerous (15 years ago it came 20th).

Table 2. *Foreign population resident in Italy. Selected communities. 2004 and 2019, as of January 1.*

Community	Italy		Index number (2004=1)
	2004	2019	
Bangladeshis	27,356	139,953	5.1
Pakistanis	27,798	122,308	4.4
Indians	44,791	157,965	3.5
Sri Lankans	39,231	111,056	2.8
Total foreigners	1,990,159	5,255,503	2.6

Source: Istat, <http://www.demo.istat.it>

It was decided to focus on the capital city since Rome has remained the major destination for migrants coming from Bangladesh to Europe.⁵ While in the past Rome had for many immigrants been a destination to fall back on, as amply documented by Knights and King,⁶ as a result of the policy adopted by the UK to limit immigration, diverting the flows originally bound for the UK towards Italy, by the beginning of the century the Italian capital had already

⁵ See L. Natale, *Vicini l'un l'altro. Condividere lo spazio all'interno di Roma*, in E. Sonnino (a cura di), *Roma e gli immigrati. La formazione di una popolazione multiculturale*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2006, pp. 165-194.

⁶ R. King, M. Knights, *The geography of Bangladeshi migration to Rome*, «Population Space and Place», IV, 1998, 4, pp. 299-321.

become a major center of settlement for the Bangladeshi community.⁷ Today it is estimated that Rome comes second (after London) for the number of Bangladeshis present in Europe.⁸ Of the Bangladeshis resident in Italy nearly one in four is registered in the capital (as of 1.1.2019), which in fact has just over 7% of the country's total foreign population. The preference shown by the Bangladeshis for the Rome area is also borne out by the fact that at the beginning of 2019 the five cities where the Bangladeshis were most numerous (Rome, Milan, Venice, Palermo and Naples) accounted for nearly 40% of their total number, as compared to less than 15% of the total foreign population (Table 1).

On January 1st 2019 the Bangladeshi residents in the capital numbered over 30,000.⁹ In the last 15 years this community has grown nearly nine times larger, while the total foreign population in Rome has only tripled. At the beginning of 2019 the community came third, after the Romanians and Filipinos. According to research data and the official findings, over half the Bangladeshis resident in Rome are from the district of Dhaka, with a sizeable proportion from Chittagong (about 30%) and Barisal. Note, however, that the districts of Dhaka and Chittagong are the two most populous areas of Bangladesh, accounting, respectively, for 32% and 19% of the population.¹⁰

Another major issue to look into in this research is whether the settlement model depends on the demographic characteristics and the length of residence in Rome. The spatial settlement of the Bangladeshis is studied on the basis of households. To this end, an *ad hoc* typology was constructed; so far, it seems no use has been made of this kind of typology in this area of research, which is usually based on observation of individual behaviors. The typology mainly comprises three household models: the first is of persons living alone, the second of families with children that have come from Bangladesh, while the third consists of families with children born in Italy. With this approach, the length of residence, and the presence of a cohabiting spouse or of children who were born in the host country or at any rate arrived at a very early age represent criteria to distinguish the settlement models of the immigrants who first arrived in the country from those who have been living in Rome for a relatively long time.

Our paper is structured thus: the first section illustrates the aims of our research, explaining the reasons that lead us to choose the community to analyze (the Bangladeshi community) and the context (the city of Rome). The second section presents a brief overview of the literature which supplied the theoretical references for study of the residential settlement of immigrants in an urban area and of the territorial segregation. In the third section attention turns to the Bangladeshi community in Italy, taking into account the trends and the main socio-demographic and economic features, while the fourth section deals with the sources and the methods adopted. The findings are discussed and conclusions set out in the subsequent sections.

⁷ L. Natale, *La città multietnica: l'esempio di Roma. Economia e Popolazione. Alcuni aspetti delle interrelazioni tra sviluppo demografico ed economico*, in M. Natale (a cura di), *Economia e Popolazione*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2002, pp. 475-501.

⁸ R. King, M. Knights, *The geography*.

⁹ According to the ISTAT (site <http://www.demo.istat.it>) statistic on demographic balances, the resident population of Bangladeshi citizens comes to 31,734 (23% of which women). It is worth noting that in the two preceding years the city and ISTAT statistics tallied very closely (differences below 1%), while in the previous period the differences had been considerable, and in some cases very much so.

¹⁰ J. Kopečna, *The Bangladeshis in Rome and in London: Housing Situation and Family Structure*, PhD diss. in Demography, Sapienza University of Rome (Italy), 2015.

2. Theoretical framework

The last few decades have seen not only an increase in mobility – and especially international mobility – in quantitative terms, but also change from the point of view of the typologies traditionally used to define it. As for long-term migration, there is no telling whether individuals who leave their own countries will settle permanently in the destination countries. They may spend some time in one country and eventually move on elsewhere according to the opportunities that may arise. This generates a feeling of transitoriness which can affect progress in residential settlement (discouraging migrants from buying houses or fully interacting with surroundings perceived as temporary, etc.).

Today, however, changes have come about in everyday social relations (with use of ICT, for example) which have opened the way to new forms of social relations that no longer depend on spatial rootedness. According to some authors,¹¹ a process has come under way that sees a weakening of bonds with specific places, including places of residence, which is undermining the territorial view of social relations. As a result, it has become hard to grasp the social dynamics of our time on the basis of social status or the territorial aspect of settlement alone. According to this approach, the other elements to be taken into account involve more nuanced concepts that are harder to pin down, including movements, circulation and circuits.

There are two main theoretical lines on these aspects. First, we have *assimilation theory*,¹² which posits that the longer the residence in the host country lasts, the narrower the economic and social gap with the autochthonous population becomes. According to the “human ecology” approach of the Chicago School, socio-economic integration and spatial assimilation of immigrants go hand-in-hand.¹³ American sociologist Massey formulated a model of *spatial assimilation* which links prolonged residence with consequent improvement in economic conditions and reduced residential concentration. According to this approach, migrants choose to settle in areas characterized by a substantial presence of compatriots to benefit from an initial network of friend/family support. In this stage districts are formed with high concentrations of compatriots and the newcomers join them. Subsequently, with advance in the process of economic and social integration in the destination country (economic improvement, family reunification) the immigrants move towards districts where members of their community are fewer and farther between.

The settlement model shows the following pattern: the first dwelling is in the central areas of the city (in particular areas with poor quality housing and relatively low rents); then, with successive shifts towards the outskirts the immigrants have access to better housing standards. This transition modifies the immigrants’ settlement pattern, bringing it closer to that of the autochthonous population. In this case the theory stresses the transitory nature of the immigrants’ residence in the areas of high residential concentration, to be seen as places of transition towards full integration in the host society, also in spatial terms.¹⁴ In practice the phasing of this transition differs according to the place, period of arrival and the immigrant’s reference community. Some authors¹⁵ see possibilities of “spatial integration” only as from the

¹¹ J. Urry, *Sociologie des mobilités*, Paris, Armand Colin, 2005.

¹² O. Dudley Duncan, S. Lieberman, *Ethnic segregation and assimilation*, «American Journal of Sociology», LXIV, 1959, 4, pp. 364-374; S. Lieberman, *Ethnic patterns in American Cities*, New York, Free Press of Glencoe, 1963.

¹³ M. Myron Gordon, *The Assimilation of American Life: The Role of Race*, New York, Religion and National Origins, Oxford University Press, 1964.

¹⁴ M. Barbagli, M. Pisati, *La città e i suoi gruppi sociali*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2012.

¹⁵ G. Verdugo, *Logement social et ségrégation résidentielle des immigrés en France, 1968-99*, «Population», LXVI, 2011, 1, pp. 171-196; J. Louis Pan Ké Shon, *La ségrégation des immigrés en France: état des lieux*, «Population et Société», 2011, 477, pp. 1-4.

third generation, in which case there would be a first non-assimilated generation, a second semi-assimilated one and a third one successfully assimilated.¹⁶

Although various researches have borne out the soundness of the *assimilation theory*,¹⁷ some controversial aspects remain. As pointed out by a number of authors,¹⁸ the spatial assimilation model fails to take fully into account certain aspects of residential segregation observed in western countries. Over the last few decades empirical studies have brought to light persisting forms of segregation of immigrants that cannot be accounted for on the basis of the assimilation model. This brings us to a better understanding of the hypotheses advanced by the *pluralism theory*, another major line of research in this area. The theory shares certain features with *assimilation theory*, but departs from it when it comes to the succession of scenarios envisaged by the latter. According to the pluralism theory, as their residence is prolonged, migrants go through a process of economic integration but at the same time experience social separation, while in some cases they may close themselves off, maintaining this attitude over time. From this viewpoint, as time goes by immigrants decide not to abandon the residential area where they first settled, but continue to bond with it for various reasons, personal, social and economic.¹⁹ However, the areas of settlement are seen to show high levels of spatial segregation lasting over time. Peach distinguishes two variants of *pluralism*:

a) *forced pluralism*, spatially represented by the *ghetto*; an exogenous segregation process is underway through which individuals find themselves segregated in certain places regardless of their intentions. A ghetto is a place with a high ethnic concentration resulting from exclusion from society, often associated with poverty and urban blight. According to Peach, the individuals of a group tend to concentrate in certain spaces within which the group they belong to represent a very large proportion: such is the case of the black ghettos in a number of North American cities, where the group become practically the sole occupants (a case described as “dual segregation”);²⁰

b) *voluntary pluralism*, spatially represented by the *ethnic enclave*, which is a matter of self-segregation on a voluntary basis of people of a particular ethnic group/religion who come together to promote their economic and social development.²¹ In this latter case, in contrast with the ghetto situation the groups are concentrated in parts of the city – often shared with other ethnic groups – quite often characterized by high standards and in some cases real prestige.²²

These theories interpret the dynamics of the immigrants’ residential settlement model in distinctly different ways, yet they have a point in common, namely awareness that immigrants experience higher levels of residential segregation.²³ Those who subscribe to *the assimilation*

¹⁶ O. Casacchia, G. Martino, L. Natale, *La presenza straniera all’interno della città. Roma e Parigi a confronto*, Roma, CISU, 2012.

¹⁷ T. Philpott, *The slum and the ghetto: Immigrants, Blacks and Reformers in Chicago, 1980-93*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1978; C. Peach, *London and New York: Contrast in British and American models of segregation*, «International Journal of Population Geography», V, 1999, 5, pp. 319-347.

¹⁸ M. Barbagli, M. Pisati, *La città*.

¹⁹ C. Peach, *Pluralist and assimilation models of ethnic settlement in London 1991*, «Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie», LXXXVIII, 1997, 2, pp. 120-134.

²⁰ It is indeed surprising that such an important distinction as that between segregation in the broad sense and “double” segregation is often ignored in analyses of the spatial distribution of an immigrant population.

²¹ A. Portes, K. Wilson, *Immigrant enclaves: an analysis of the labour market experience of Cubans in Miami*, «American Journal of Sociology», LXXXVI, 1980, 2, pp. 295-319.

²² C. Peach, *The Ghetto and the Ethnic Enclave*, in D. Paul Varady (ed), *Desegregating the City: Ghettos, enclaves and inequalities*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 2005, pp. 31-48.

²³ Segregation occurs when the distribution of social groups amongst the districts of a city is disproportionate. See M. Oberti, E. Preteicelle, *La segregazione urbana*, Roma, Aracne, 2017.

theory see this condition as transitory, marking only the first phase of residence, while for *pluralism theory* the high levels of residential segregation persist even long after arrival in the host country.

As for the case of Italy, it is by no means easy to determine empirically which of the two theories is more suited to explain the dynamics of the immigrants' residential settlement. In fact, the two approaches could be accurately compared only on the basis of extensive and documented longitudinal investigation, which would be particularly challenging and costly given the generally recognized difficulties facing any survey on an elusive and dynamic group, as is the case with foreign immigrants. The alternative is to collect evidence in the field, forming a broad picture of the residential settlement and comparing the different groups in terms of types of households, settlement contexts, length of residence, and so forth. Even taking this approach, however, the need remains for a theoretical framework within which the evidence can be examined to ascertain which of the two hypotheses on immigrants' residential integration is borne out.

According to the assimilation theory, for example, the only barriers that foreigners have to tackle to live in the host society with the same rights as the autochthonous population depend solely on the internal characteristics of the ethnic group, namely socio-economic status and social class. However, more recent researches applying what is known as 'differential incorporation theory' have demonstrated that the process of integration also depends very much on exogenous pressures exerted by the host population, discriminating on the basis of ethnic identity and color of the skin.²⁴

It is impossible to account for the effects on segregation of the factors lying behind forms of residential settlement without more elaborate formalization. To begin with, the focus is on the effects resulting from the characteristics of the immigrant population, and secondly on the effects of the conditions obtained in the country of destination. Since these factors do not play independent roles in the process of segregation, due account needs to be taken of the interrelations that develop between them. For the migrant population the factors to take into consideration also concern the culture of the country of origin, the heritage of norms and beliefs, the capacity to form ethnic niches,²⁵ and indeed the typology of the migration project.

In this study we will in fact begin with this last factor: the typology of the migration project (Diagram 1). With the formalization we propose it is possible to follow the various paths that begin to branch out from the moment of arrival in the country of destination.

On one hand, we have a settlement model for persons pursuing a short-period migration project (itinerary 1), making for an area of transit, i.e. a place offering temporary accommodation (low quality standards, ample supply of shared accommodations, affordable rents), which they will sooner or later leave when eventually deciding to move on to other destinations. On the other hand, we have persons pursuing a long-period migration project (itinerary 2), with initial entry in a transit area followed by a move to the first settlement area, again in accommodations with low real estate value and relatively poor quality, but offering more stable conditions of residence. For some, residence in this area turns out to be permanent, while for others it is temporary. In the case of the latter we can distinguish between persons

²⁴ J. Darden, F. Cristaldi, *The Impact of Immigration Policies on Transnational Filipino Immigrant Women: A Comparison of Their Social and Spatial Incorporation in Rome and Toronto*, «Journal of Urban History», XXVIII, 2011, 2, pp. 695-709.

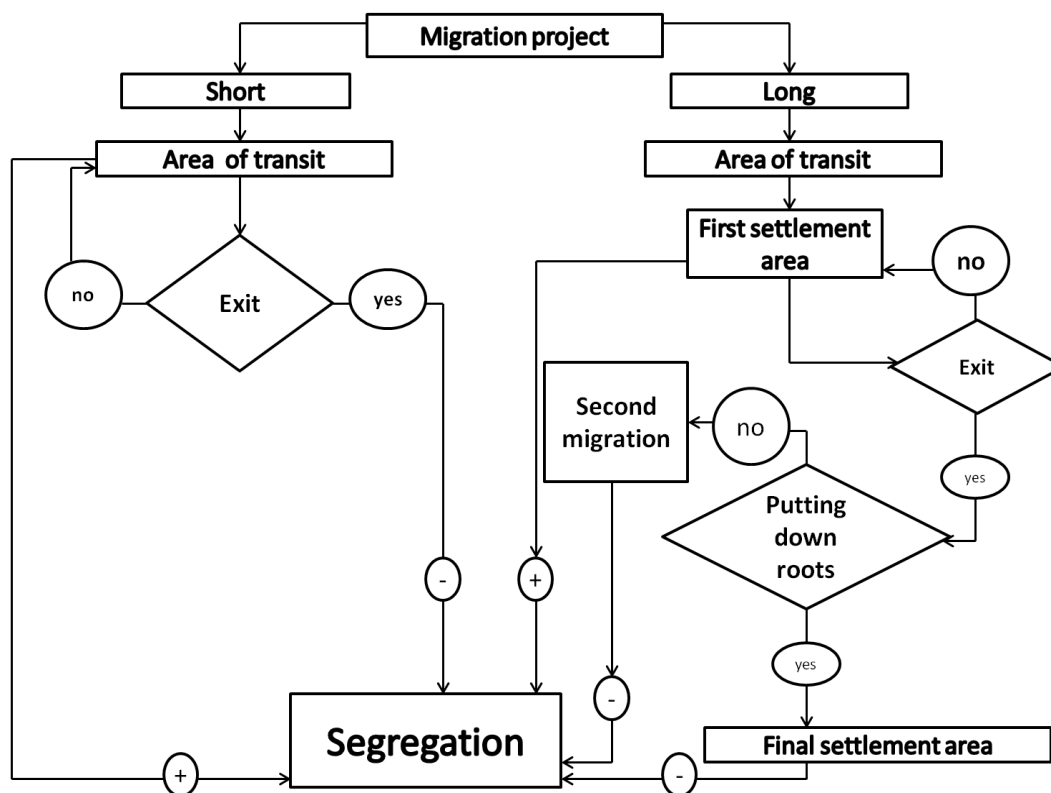
²⁵ M. Barbagli, M. Pisati, *La città*.

waiting to move on to another country of immigration (second migrations,²⁶ as they are called) and others who wish to put down roots in the destination country and intend to move to areas offering better living conditions. These itineraries have different effects on the intensity of segregation, which increases in some cases and decreases in others.

As for the characteristics of the three settlement areas, they can be ascertained by observing the habitation and family typologies, the latter determined, in the absence of evidence of the type of structure that on the basis of the sex ratio i.e. the ratio to males and females (multiplied by 100).

With regard to the housing typology, albeit to different degrees in both the transit and first settlement areas, cohabitation appears to be fairly common in the districts with large immigrant populations, partly as a result of rent speculation leading to forced cohabitation. Some observers note that the Italian situation is characterized by particularly widespread cohabitation depending largely on the fact that historically immigrant populations have found accommodation in areas of the cities marked by peculiar, provisional dynamics. These areas are often perceived as having marginal status, critical spaces subject to progressive abandonment by the autochthonous middle classes (cf. Diagram 1, Legend).

Diagram 1. *Segregation effects of migration itineraries in the host country*



²⁶ The term second migrations refers to migrants moving to third countries after relatively prolonged residence in Italy. It also applies to those of immigrants who, having acquired Italian citizenship, wish to move to another EU country. Second migrations are not to be confused with return migrations or situations of transit.

Legend

<i>Area characteristics</i>	<i>Housing typology</i>	<i>Family typology</i>	<i>Sex Ratio</i>	<i>Actual cases (Rome)</i>
Transit area	Cohabitation, low quality	Adults aged 20-40 living alone	High or very high	Esquilino
First settlement area	More limited cohabitation, accommodation in low-quality rents	Few lone adults aged 20-40, few families	Medium-high	Torpignattara/Centocelle
Final settlement area	Accommodations rented or in some cases owned	Prevalence of couples with or without children	Tending to balance	Casilino

In the process of transition from first to permanent settlement areas immigrants seek better living standards, with the result that ownership of the dwellings is no longer as rare as in the first two phases. In the transit areas, the households consist mainly of adults, mostly male, alone and in the 20-40 age group. This picture is to be seen in Rome, in the Esquilino district which, due to its morphological/geographic features (in the vicinity of the central station, accommodation supply traditionally biased towards people in transit, presence of religious facilities in support of immigrants, such as Caritas), has always been considered an area suitable for short-period settlement. In the first settlement area, alongside the adults living alone there are also some families. The sex-ratio remains high, although lower than in the transit area. Such is the case of districts like Pigneto and the neighboring Torpignattara, defined in the literature as the first Italian Banglatown. Living conditions improve in the final settlement area; there are fewer adults living alone and more family units, with or without children. The sex ratio index drops towards balance value (about 1).²⁷

In Diagram 2 attention focuses on the effects that conditions in the destination country have on segregation. To be noted in particular is the attenuating effect of policies favoring family reunification and policies to curb discriminatory attitudes on behalf of the autochthonous population.

²⁷ According to the latest available data, the sexratio index for Bangladeshis in Rome varies greatly from the city center to the suburbs and outskirts: in the first three cases indicated in Diagram 1 the index is high (over 400, i.e. 4 males per female) in the Esquilino district (transit area), around 240-250 in Torpignattara (which includes Pigneto) and Centocelle (first settlement areas), below 200 in Casilino, adjacent to the preceding areas, showing the characteristics of a final settlement area (source: Ufficio Statistico di Roma Capitale, as of 31.12.2018). The index comes well above 100 (gender balance) consistently with the statistic showing a marked bias towards males (279 males every 100 females at the end of 2018) observed in Rome.

Diagram 2. *Factors affecting residential segregation*

Associated with conditions in the destination country	Effect on segregation	Territorial level
<i>Policies favoring family reunification</i> Over the last few years, while the issue of residence permits for reasons of work has been reduced, there has been a considerable increase in permits for reasons of family reunification	Reduction	National
Policies to curb stigmatized attitudes on behalf of the autochthonous population; e.g. the case of the Roma community transferred from their camps in Florence beyond the municipal boundary	Reduction	Local/city
<i>Gentrification</i>	Initially uncertain, subsequently reduction	Metropolitan cities
<i>Housing market conditions</i> Housing typology peripheral areas. Supply of affordable, accommodations for families	Reduction	Some metropolitan cities only
Areas with abandoned buildings (ex-factories/offices) with the possibility of low quality accommodation at very low or zero cost	Increase	Local/city
<i>Labor market conditions:</i> Labor demand: services for families with residence in the employer's premises	Reduction	National
Other labor demand	Uncertain	Metropolitan cities
Presence of market niches with a view to an ethnic economy	Increase	Metropolitan cities

Also to be noted is the importance of both the housing market conditions (in this case the effects can be positive or negative) and the labor market, showing situations in which the labor demand attenuates processes of residential segregation alongside others in which the effects are more uncertain.

3. *The Bangladeshi community in Italy and Rome: some characteristics*

Over the average period²⁸ the Bangladeshi community shows vigorous growth. As of January 1st, 2018, about half (47%) of Italy's Bangladeshi community were in the North of Italy (residence permit data). For non-EU citizens in general the figure comes to 62% (Ministry of Labor and Social Policies, 2018). Lombardy, which comes second among the Italian regions for the size of its Bangladeshi community, hosts 15.5% (as compared with the 25.6% of all the non-EU citizens considered), while Veneto has 14%. Lazio turns out to be the major destination region (29.4%, while the total share of non-EU citizens comes to 11.1%).

Recent studies have shown that small and medium-sized towns in particular attract immigrant populations. Veneto shows a fair scattering in this respect. Immigrants find their way into the small towns for settled residence. A much studied case is that of Alte Ceccato, a district of a town in the province of Vicenza, seen by some²⁹ as a sociological laboratory of multiculturalism. In 2008 Alte Ceccato hosted about 2000 people of immigrant origin, over half of which from Bangladesh. Thus the district has come to hold a particular significance both for

²⁸ Consistently with findings for the total foreign population, worth noting is the recent slowdown in growth of the Bangladeshi community. From 2015 to 2019 the situation was stationary; the drop in 2017 was counterbalanced by arrivals the following year. In the same period the non-EU foreign population resident in Italy decreased. Apart from the effect of acquisition of Italian citizenship – a negative factor in the Bangladeshi population balance – another significant factor could be the sizeable recent flows towards the United Kingdom. See F. Della Puppa, R. King, *The new 'twice migrants': motivations, experiences and disillusionments of Italian-Bangladeshis relocating to London*, «Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies», XLV, 2018, 11, pp. 1936-1952.

²⁹ F. Della Puppa, E. Gelati, *Alte Ceccato. Una banglatown nel nord est*, Trento, Professional Dreamers, 2015.

the Bangladeshis in Veneto, who attribute Alte with special symbolic and identity value, and for the autochthonous population and institutions.³⁰

The Bangladeshi community shows a marked imbalance from the demographic point of view. The women account for just over a quarter of the community; the average age is 29 years, appreciably lower than that of the non-EU citizens in general (34 years). There is a relatively large proportion of one-parent families (16%), while 5% of the Bangladeshi families consist of couples without children.

In Rome one-person households account for the majority (40%), followed by couples with children (21%). The average size of the Bangladeshi household in Italy is 2.7 members, in Rome 2.2 (Table 3). This is due to the incidence of one-person households, excluding which the sizes are similar (3.76 as compared with 3.84).

Table 3. *Average size of Bangladeshi households in Rome and Italy*

Individuals, household, size	Rome	Italy
	1.1.2014	1.1.2017
Individuals in households	20523	139400
Household	9499	51588
Average household size	2.16	2.70
Average non-one-person household size	3.76	3.84

Source: for Rome, Ufficio Statistico di Roma Capitale; for Italy, Istat

55% of the Bangladeshis hold long-period residence permits (62% is the figure for non-EU citizens); the number of permits issued for humanitarian and asylum reasons shows a marked increase.

The rate of unemployment stands at 65%. The gender gap (males 86.2%, females 10.6%) is much wider than shown by the other communities. There also appears to be a marked incidence of entrepreneurial work: there are over 30,000 sole proprietorships of Bangladeshi origin in Italy (1.8% of the non-EU entrepreneurs in Italy). The province of Rome heads the list for number of Bangladeshi enterprises, numbering 13,300 (43% of the total), followed by Naples (10%), Milan (9.7%) and Palermo (6.8%). The main employment sector is trade, with 59% of the active Bangladeshis, followed by the industrial sector (23.3%). The bias towards trade can be attributed to the prestige that the Bangladeshis attach to the sector³¹ (Pompeo, 2011). Research carried out in Rome has shown that relatively unskilled and manual work, and indeed work performed in subordinate roles, summed up with the term *kaj*, is deemed degrading, especially by Bangladeshis of the middle and upper-middle classes. Only trade is devoid of any stigma since it is not *kaj*: having a shop means doing business.³²

³⁰ A point worth noting is that the town of Montecchio Maggiore, of which Alte Ceccato is a district, has seen a considerable reduction of the Bangladeshi community residents, falling from 1500 at the end of 2013 (accounting for 36% of all the foreigners) to just 776 by 1 January 2019 (22% of all the foreigners). Comparing the 2004 and 2019 data, the province of Vicenza is the only one in Italy to have seen a contraction of the resident Bangladeshi population. Moreover, at Montecchio the Bangladeshi the gender gap appears closer than at the national level (260 males for 100 females).

³¹ F. Pompeo, *Pigneto-Banglatown. Migrazioni e conflitti di cittadinanza in una periferia storica romana*, Roma Meti, 2011.

³² F. Pompeo, *Pigneto-Banglatown*.

The wages of the Bangladeshi and non-EU workers (INPS data on employees) are lower in all the sectors. They are 4% lower for farmworkers, 12% lower for employees, and 30% lower for domestic workers.³³

Finally, Bangladesh tops the list of countries receiving remittances from Italy. In 2017 about 533 million euros were sent to the country, accounting for 12.9% of all the remittances sent.³⁴

4. Source and method

On the basis of Registry Office data, we can draw a map of the foreign communities' settlement patterns within the city. Here we use data on the resident population of foreign citizens registered at the Rome Registry Office.

There were two reasons for the choice of this source. Our aim is to study the residential pattern of Bangladeshis with prolonged residence in the city, a more settled population, better integrated in the city (as attested in particular by the number of families), and it is a population precisely evidenced by the Registry Office, albeit with the usual limitations.³⁵

Moreover, the official statistics provide evidence disaggregated at a territorial level, particularly useful to study the settlement pattern. The Registry Office data offer a picture of the socio-spatial structure in the city – its complexity, dynamics and changing spatial patterns.³⁶ Nevertheless, for the foreign population there is the limitation of not being able to take into account the more unstable or irregular components, detection of which can be attempted only with specific surveys or other such means.

The source at our disposal does, however, offer considerable advantages with the possibility to perform highly detailed territorial study. In our study we use various territorial typologies: subdivision by “Municipi”, i.e. administrative districts (19 at the time), urban areas (155) and census blocks (13,000).

Study of the Bangladeshis' spatial settlement focuses on households, not individuals. The household is the appropriate unit to observe and analyze residential segregation both because the members of a family nucleus share the same dwelling and because any decisions about moving to a new house are taken within the family, thus no longer individual but shared decisions.

On the basis of ad hoc statistical data extraction, we drew up records of individuals belonging to households comprising at least one Bangladeshi citizen (situation as of 1st January 2014).

The households were distinguished on the basis of a typology structured thus:

- a) one-person households (individuals living alone);
- b) couples without children;

³³ Ministry of Labor and Welfare, *La comunità bangladese in Italia. Rapporto annuale sulla presenza dei mi granti*, Roma, 2018.

³⁴ Ministry of Labor and Welfare, *La comunità bangladese*; M. Alamgir Kabir, Md Mizanur Rahman, *Moving to Europe: Bangladeshi Migration to Italy*, ISASI Working Paper, 2012, 142, pp. 142-146.

³⁵ The limitations of registry office data are well known (cfr. L. Natale, *La città multi-etnica*): a) missing cancellations, which may be particularly frequent for foreigners (cfr. P. Francesca Cortese, G. Gallo, E. Paluzzi, A. Silvestrini, *Il confronto tra anagrafe e censimento 2001 nel Comune di Roma*, Roma, Documenti Istat, 2010, 6); b) the non-localized, now however hardly a problem in the case of Rome thanks to the great efforts made in the past (as of 2018 the share of non-localized stood at 0.3 per 1000 residents); c) the problem of fictitious residence, which remains a critical point. Given its importance for analysis of the geography of the Bangladeshis in Rome, we will return to this issue in the text. Finally, it must be borne in mind that the registry office does not provide sufficient data on the level of cohabitation, which is widespread in some foreign communities including, for example, the Bangladeshis, as the cohabitants generally give rise to different households.

³⁶ See M. Oberti, E. Preteicelle, *La segregazione*.

- c) families with minors born in Italy or having arrived at preschool age (families with second generations or FDUEs);
- d) families with minors arrived in Italy at the age of six or more (F1.1-F1.75);³⁷
- e) multigenerational families with children belonging to both the previous typologies (both c and d).

The methodology employed entailed in the first stage the calculation of summary indicators in use in the quantitative analysis of urban segregation: the Gini index, Lieberman's raw and adjusted exposure index,³⁸ the location quotient and the centrographic measures. On the basis of these indicators we analyzed the segregation of the various types of Bangladeshi households.

We then went on to construct measures of polarization of the Bangladeshi families. Kriging spatial analysis³⁹ was carried out by drawing up density maps to summarize the distribution patterns of the household typologies. The advantage of density maps lies in definition of a new territorial zone, intermediate between census block and urban area, offering a new geographical picture of the presence of Bangladeshi households in the territory of Rome.⁴⁰ This is achieved using a *K-function*, or Ripley's *K-function* (1977), thanks to which it is possible to analyze the spatial configuration of point data and test for the presence of aggregative/repulsive processes at various scales of proximity.⁴¹ This measure also serves to describe certain characteristics of the geography of the Bangladeshi household. Having no point data on the location of the households, we used geocoded census tract data.⁴² In short, if we take a distribution of N points in space S , Ripley's $K(ds)$ statistic supplies the mean value of the points located at a certain distance d from a generic i^{th} point. For the various distances or degrees of proximity the *K-function* is defined by the following relation:

$$K(d) = \lambda^{-1} E[\text{number of points within distance } \leq d \text{ from an arbitrary point}]$$

where λ is the mean number of points per area unit calculated as the ratio between N and S , $E[.]$ the expected value. Repeating the procedure for all the points in the distribution, the expected value comes to:

$$E(d) = \frac{N}{S} K(d)$$

³⁷ The reference literature is the literature on second generations, distinguishing generation types 2 (born in the host country or just arrived), 1.75 (children arriving at an age between 6 and 9 years), 1.5 (children arriving at an age of 10-12 years), 1.25 (13-17) and type 1 (arrived subsequently). See S. Strozza, *Le seconde generazioni. Il punto della situazione in Italia*, in O. Casacchia, A. Guarneri, L. Natale, (a cura di), *Tra i banchi di scuola. Alunni italiani e stranieri a Roma e nel Lazio*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2009.

³⁸ M. Barbagli, M. Pisati, *La città*; N. Denton, D. Steven Massey, *The dimensions of residential segregation*, «Social Forces», LXVII, 1988, 2, pp. 281-315.

³⁹ N. Cressie, *Statistics for Spatial Data*, Chichester, New York, Wiley & Sons, 1993; F. Giovanni Truglia, *La città in-visibile. Analisi statistica spaziale degli stranieri nel comune di Roma*, «Sociologia e Ricerca Sociale», LXXIX, 2009, 89, pp. 59-81; F. Giovanni Truglia, *Patrin 1 – Le radici e le ali. Luoghi di provenienza e dinamiche spaziali*, in R. Cipollini (a cura di), *Paesaggi marginali, Romanes a Roma. Organizzazione sociale, modelli culturali, caratteri socio-demografici*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2012.

⁴⁰ F. Giovanni Truglia, *Patrin 1*.

⁴¹ A review of the various fields of research in which this tool is used is contained in J. Illian, A. Penttinen, D. Stoyan, *Statistical Analysis and Modelling of Spatial Point Pattern*, Chichester, Wiley & Sons, 2008. See also G. Arbia, *Analisi econometrica di dati spaziali*, Pescara, Università G. D'Annunzio di Chieti, 1996.

⁴² Before going on to spatial analysis it was necessary to identify the census blocks in which one of the three types of family considered was present, transform them into point units (through measure of the barycenter of the tract) and weight each point with the value of the location coefficient.

where $K(d)$ indicates the area of the circle with radius d . In the case of an entirely random spatial configuration (CSR, i.e. Complete Spatial Randomness), corresponding to a homogeneous Poisson process, the expected value will be:

$$E(CSR) = \frac{N}{S} \pi d^2$$

so that $K(d) = \pi d^2$. The procedure proposed by Ripley consists in comparing for each distance d the observed $K(d)$ value with the theoretical πd^2 value. If the first term is greater than the second, the configuration proves to be of aggregative type, while in the contrary case the measure reflects a repulsive type of configuration

Given the nonlinearity of the difference $K(d) - \pi d^2$ we then go on to the following transformation:

$$L(d) = \sqrt{\frac{K(d)}{\pi}} - d$$

In this case positive values indicate an attractive type of spatial process, while negative values reflect a repulsive type.

As pointed out above, the K-function used in this study weights the points with the value of the location coefficients. We therefore have a weighted statistic given thus:

$$K(d) = \frac{E \sum_i \sum_j p_i p_j I(d_{ij} \leq d)}{\lambda \theta^2}$$

where d_{ij} indicates the distance between the i^{th} point and the j^{th} arbitrary point, $I(d_{ij} \leq d)$ is the indicator function that takes on values of 1 or 0 according as to whether d_{ij} is lesser or greater than d , and p_i and p_j other weights associated with the i^{th} and j^{th} arbitrary point. θ gives the mean of the two weights.⁴³

5. Results

5.1 The Bangladeshi households

The households analyzed in the study number 9499 corresponding to 20,534 individuals (26% less than the Bangladeshis officially registered at the Registry Office).⁴⁴ In fact, due to the occurrence of residences of convenience some areas of the municipal territory show exorbitant values of foreigners fictitiously registered at the premises of third sector associations.⁴⁵ We therefore eliminated the census tracts in which there were premises of the associations offering foreigners addresses of convenience and the apparent presence of Bangladeshis was purely formal. This is an absolutely indispensable correction, for otherwise the data prove seriously biased. In fact, the Bangladeshi residential pattern would appear to be excessively centralized since the associations in question are often located in the city center.

One-person households (50% of the total) are the prevalent typology shown by the Bangladeshis residents in Rome (Table 4).⁴⁶

⁴³ A. Penttinen, *Statistics for Marked Point Patterns*, Helsinki, The Finnish Statistical Society, 2006.

⁴⁴ The available data needed thorough revision and sifting before they could be used, which entailed the elimination of a large share of households.

⁴⁵ M. Crisci, *Italiani e stranieri nello spazio urbano. Dinamiche della popolazione di Roma*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2010; J. Kopecna, *The Bangladeshis*.

⁴⁶ With the data available to us it was not possible to identify cohabiting families, a condition which, according to various authors (cfr. J. Kopecna, *The Bangladeshis*), is very widespread among the Bangladeshis.

The average age is about 35 years. Large family units consisting of at least six components have a significant share (5%). Couples with children account for about a third of the total, while the one-parent families come to just over 500 (6%).

Table 4. “Bangladeshi” households resident in Rome as of 31.12.2013 by type of household

Household typology	Number of families	%	Number of components
One-person households	5,468	58	5,468
Households with at least two components	4,031	42	15,055
<i>a. including children</i>	3,068	32	12,557
<i>couple with children</i>	1,770	18	4,229
<i>couple with children and other components</i>	751	8	6,707
<i>a single parent (with or without other components)</i>	547	6	1,621
<i>b. without children</i>	963	10	2,498
<i>couples (with or without other components)</i>	319	3	760
<i>other types of household</i>	644	7	1,738
Total	9,499	100	20,523

Note (a): excluding Bangladeshis forming a one-person household present in the census blocks which include fictitious residences and non-localized.

Source: drawn from registry office data on the population resident in Rome

On the basis of the typology illustrated above, the 3068 families with children (32% of the total) fall into three groups (Table 5).

The families with second-generation children (FDUEs, families with children born in Italy or arrived at preschool age) come to 2,223, accounting for 72% of the total of families with at least one child (Table 5). The other two typologies comprise almost equal numbers of cases; there are 439 families with children who arrived at preschool age (F1-F1.75), while 406 are multigenerational, i.e. nuclei with children born in Italy and/or arrived in Italy at the age of 6 years (or more).

Table 5. “Bangladeshi” households by type of household and generation typology. Rome. 31.12.2013.

Type of household	Children born in Italy or arrived at preschool age (FDUE)	%	Children arrived aged 6 or more (F1.1-1.75)	%	Children born or arrived later (multigenerational)	%	Total	%
Couple with children	1,301	59	235	54	234	58	1,770	58
Couple with children and other components	539	24	91	21	121	30	751	24
One parent only (with or without other components)	383	18	113	26	51	13	547	18
Total	2,223	100	439	100	406	100	3,068	100

Source: drawn from registry office data on the population resident in Rome

5. 2 The differences within the city

From various researches it emerges that the Bangladeshis show a very different residential pattern as compared to other communities.⁴⁷ Even several years after arrival they are still highly concentrated in particular areas of the territory of Rome. In fact, they show the highest concentration index (Table 6).

Table 6. Gini concentration index for some communities. Rome, 31.12.2013.

Community	Index
Bangladeshis	0.79
Chinese	0.76
Filipinos	0.62
Romanians	0.56
Total foreigners	0.52

A more moderate concentration should be shown by families with children born in Italy or who arrived in Italy at a very early age – families showing more evident signs of integration – and in fact the concentration appears slightly less intense for these types of families, defined as second-generation (0.76 as compared with 0.78-0.82 for the other categories: cf. Table 7), but the differences between levels are so small that the hypothesis appears only partially borne out.

⁴⁷ F. Benassi, F. Heins, F. Lipizzi, *La segregazione residenziale di alcune collettività straniere nel Sistema Locale del Lavoro di Roma 2001-2011*, in C. Bonifazi (a cura di), *Migrazioni e integrazione nell'Italia di oggi*, Roma, CNR-IRPPS, 2017, pp. 131-144.

Lieberson's isolation index,⁴⁸ a measure of the probability of finding only members of one's own community in the district,⁴⁹ indicates the degree to which the community is exposed to the host population. The index is affected by the size of the population whose isolation is measured: the larger the population, the higher will be the index. To take this factor into account, an adjustment is proposed in the literature with which to obtain a more clearly interpretable index.⁵⁰

Table 7. *Gini concentration index according to some typologies. Bangladeshi households resident in Rome, 31.12.2013.*

Type of family	Index
One-person households	0.82
Multigenerational families (with children born in Italy or arriving there shortly after birth)	0.80
Families with children that arrived in Italy at the age of 6 + (F1-1.75)	0.78
Families with children born in Italy (FDUE)	0.76

The index for the total of the Bangladeshi households shows a very low value (0.07: cf. Table 8), but nevertheless higher than is found for the other subgroups. On adjusting the index⁵¹ the situation is reversed. For example, for the families with children born in Italy – those showing fuller and probably longer-lasting integration in the life of the city – the adjusted indicator comes to 13, which means that while representing about 2 per thousand of the population of Rome, they live in areas where they constitute 2.5% of the population, a figure 13 times higher than observed for the city as a whole. In other words, an FDUE type family, on average 1 out of 500 in the city territory, lives in areas where the share of the topology comes to 25 per thousand, or 1 in 40. On the other hand, the less integrated families – those that do not include children born in Italy (defined as *F1.1-1.75*) – account for 0.4 per thousand of the total but are present in areas where an average share of these families comes to 1.2%, a value 30 times higher than observed in the city as a whole, and more than twice that of the second-generation families (Table 8).

⁴⁸ The Lieberson xP_y index, obtained as the sum, for all the areas, of the product of the percentage of individuals belonging to group x out of the total of the group present in an area and the proportion of the population y in the total of the area shows the degree of exposure of a population x as compared with a population y . If we consider the exposure of a population to itself, we obtain a quantity of type xP_x (or yP_y), which represents a measure of *isolation*. This is in fact the type of measure used in our work.

⁴⁹ P. Apparicio, *Les indices de ségrégation résidentielle: un outil intégré dans un système d'information géographique*, «Cybergeo: European Journal of Geography», CXXXIV, 2000, pp. 1-17.

⁵⁰ M. Barbagli, M. Pisati, *La città*; O. Casacchia, L. Natale, G. Verdugo, *Minority segregation processes in an urban context: a comparison between Rome and Paris*, in C. Crocetta (a cura di), *Statistics and Demography: the legacy of Corrado Gini*, Padova, Cleup, 2015, pp. 83-90.

⁵¹ Adjustment is achieved by comparing the index with the percentage of individuals belonging to this group in the total population.

Table 8. *Percentage of Bangladeshi households, isolation index (simple and adjusted) for type of family. Rome, 31.12.2013*

Index	Total	Children born in Italy or arrived at preschool age (FDUE)	Children arrived from age of 6 on (F1.1-1.75)	Children born or arrived after (multi generation)	One-person households
% of the total of households in Rome (A)	0.008	0.0019	0.0004	0.0004	0.0047
Isolation index (B)	0.070	0.025	0.012	0.011	0.053
Adjusted isolation index (B/A)	8.5	13.0	30.8	30.2	11.3

Basically, the second-generation families are found to experience a lesser degree of isolation with greater chances of living in the districts shared by families belonging to other groups. The relatively low degree of isolation observed in the case of one-person households also has to do with their more widespread presence in the areas defined as transit areas and characterized by the copresence of a number of communities sharing the space on a temporary basis. In short, both the second-generation and one-person Bangladeshi families experience less isolation than the other two typologies.

5. 3. *The geography of the Bangladeshi households*

In this section we provide an analysis of the geographical distribution according to the household typologies.⁵² We created a location quotient showing the ratio between the proportion of Bangladeshi households in a particular census tract and the proportion observed in the city as a whole.⁵³ The quotient reveals a marked imbalance in the territory of Rome: in many areas the proportion of Bangladeshi population comes far higher than the average for the city as a whole (location quotient above 10). Indeed, in some areas the quotient shows extremely high values (above 50), indicating parts of the city strongly marked by Bangladeshi presence. The location quotient values shown by the second-generation families differ greatly from those of the Bangladeshi community as a whole. Some areas are characterized by low concentrations of Bangladeshi households but a large number of second-generation families (as in the north-west quadrant of the city). The Bangladeshis living alone are scattered throughout the city territory.

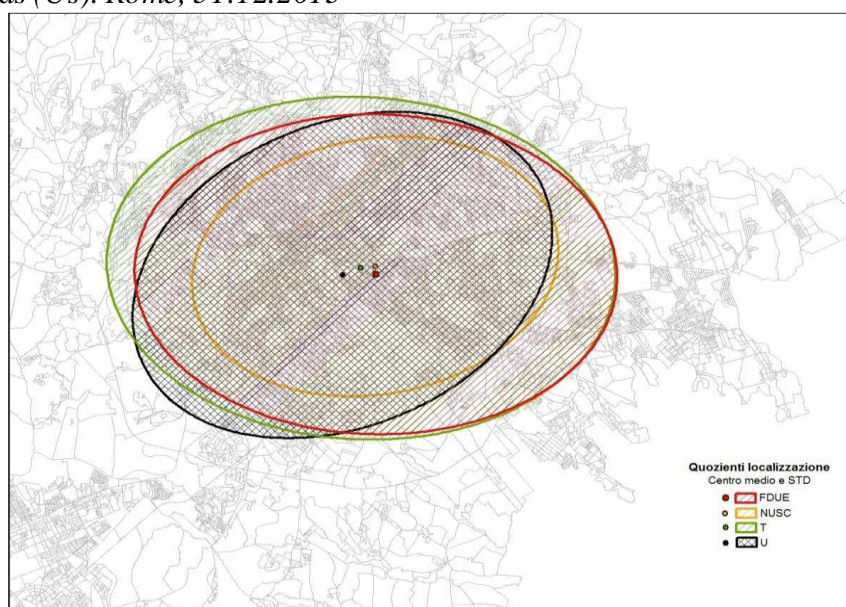
Centrographic representation (Map 1) shows the position of the barycenter in the various family groups (alongside the one-person households and second-generation families indication is also given of the barycenter of the households that do not include couples, identified here as *NUSCs*): on average the position of Bangladeshis living alone comes close to the city center, bearing out our previous considerations on the settlement pattern of this type of household, while the position of households in general (*T* in the map) falls in the direction of the eastern outskirts.

⁵² Examination focuses on three of the five categories identified since the type 1-1.75 and multigenerational families come too low in numbers for thorough analysis.

⁵³ A quotient around 1 means that in that particular census tract the proportion of Bangladeshis in the population as a whole comes close to that of the city as a whole. A higher quotient amounting to 40 means that in that tract the Bangladeshi population is 40 times higher than the average for the city as a whole. For reasons of space the maps with the location quotients are not presented.

In comparison with the earlier cases, the barycenter of the second-generation households (FDUEs) lies further east. Basically, with family reunification there tends to be a shift in the direction of the outskirts, leaving the city center, which serves as a transit or temporary residence base for persons living alone. The NUSC group (households that do not include a couple) also show an eastward tendency, albeit remaining slightly more central than the FDUE group.

Map 1. *Bangladeshi household centographic statistics by census tract and type of family: total (T), second-generation families (FDUEs), aggregations without couples (NUSCs) and one-person households (Us). Rome, 31.12.2013*



Applying Ripley's index, we obtain values of the quantity $L(d)$ consistently positive for the various distances, indicative of an aggregative type of spatial process.⁵⁴ This process shows maximum clustering at the following distances between points: 2.5 kilometers for second-generation families (FDUEs), 7.5 for households that do not include a couple (NUSCs), and 9.5 for the one-person households (Table 9). For the households as a whole, the maximum clustering is reached at a distance of 11 kilometers.

Table 9. *Ripley's index for type of household. Bangladeshi households, Rome, 31.12.2013.*

Type of household	Ripley's index
Children born in Italy or arrived at preschool age (FDUE)	2.5
Not including a couple (NUSC)	7.5
One-person households (U)	9.5
Total Bangladeshi households (T)	11.0

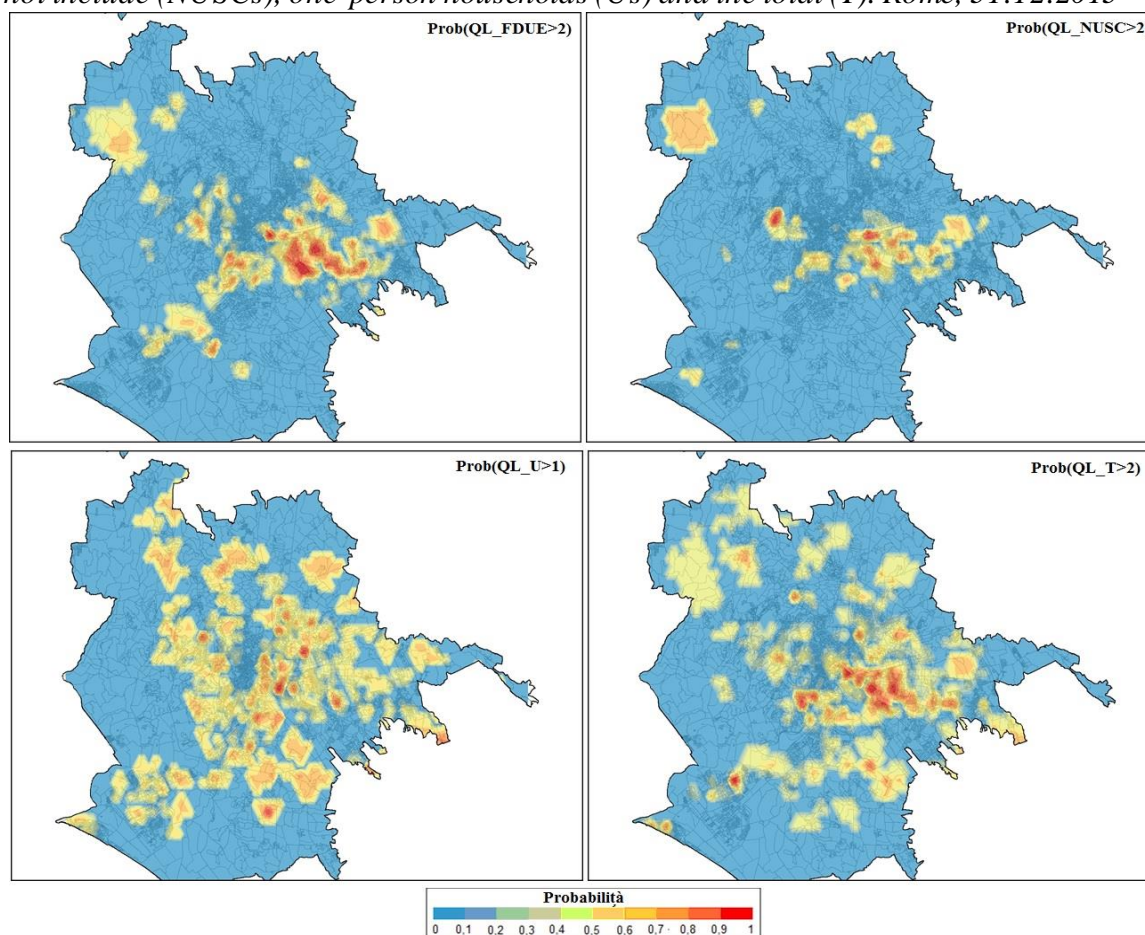
⁵⁴ For reasons of space the tables are not provided here.

Finally, with *kriging* spatial procedures we drew up maps showing the density of Bangladeshi households by category. These maps reflect the probability of encountering at least one household of that typology in a certain territory-point (Map 2), thereby helping us to understand the pattern of distribution over the territory in two ways in particular:

a) the areas emerging from the density maps are obtained independently of the administrative grid concerned: this is an advantage since the picture obtained is not conditioned by the form or extent of the territorial unit to which reference is made to collect data. In general, representation based on identification of areas with outlines that are fuzzy insofar as they do not follow the lines of the administrative units (in this case, the census blocks) prove much clearer;

b) in the density maps distortion due to the presence of high or low location quotients caused by measures obtained with numbers lacking robustness is better controlled, since *kriging* standardizes the data on the basis of the value of the effective population intensity. Joint examination of the quotient and location maps on the one hand and the density maps on the other leads to some important considerations. For example, taking the distribution of one-person households over the territory of Rome, erroneous perception of a considerable presence in the north-west quadrant of the city, due to a very high quotient obtained with low figures, is corrected on observing the corresponding density map conveying a clear impression of an area showing no particular occurrence of this type of household.

Map 2. *Kriging indicator density for second-generation households (FDUEs), households that do not include (NUSCs), one-person households (Us) and the total (T). Rome, 31.12.2013*



The maps clearly confirm that the Bangladeshis living alone are present in the city center, but also in the other parts of the city of Rome including a part of the municipal territory that borders on the sea (the south-west end). Households that do not include a couple (NUSCs here) are less scattered but show at least two clusters at a certain distance from one another: in the eastern quadrant of the city, but also an appreciable occurrence in an area situated in the central-west segment. The second-generation households (FDUEs) live mainly in the eastern quadrant of the city corresponding to the course of the Via Casilina, the area of final settlement.

6. Conclusions

In the literature various paradigms have been proposed to account for the settlement practices of immigrants in the destination cities. In the broad range of models we find, on the one hand, some that indicate an initial stage of centralization preceding a later stage of dispersal over the city territory, and on the other hand others showing a high concentration in the first period followed by decidedly limited dispersal even several years after arrival. Empirical verification of the various models depends on the possibility to arrive at a clear interpretation of the settlement pattern dynamics without limiting observation to a particular moment in time, which would be like taking a simple snapshot.

In this study empirical verification of the Bangladeshi settlement pattern was carried out with analysis by household typology. The assumption was that persons living alone show different spatial settlement from second-generation families that include children born in Italy or that arrived at a very early age, indicative of greater integration in the city territory. In other words, the various household typologies are associated with different settlement patterns shown by the Bangladeshi community in the territory of Rome.

This picture partially reflects models known to us in the literature. In fact, the Bangladeshis with weak family bonds (single or living in households of cohabiting individuals that do not include a couple) exhibit a greater tendency to gather in the central areas (the transit areas). However, our findings show that alongside settlement in the central areas there is also a pattern of widespread settlement throughout the city of Rome.

Observing the density maps, we find a distinct tendency on the part of the more integrated families – families with children born in Italy – to shift towards the outskirts. Among other things, in fact, the outer neighborhoods prove more compatible with the needs of family life.

Moreover, in Rome the Bangladeshis do not concentrate in areas where their community is preponderant, a characteristic that would create conditions for a veritable ghetto. In Italy settlement of the immigrant communities is not managed with a specific public housing policy but implemented on the basis of personal strategies or indications provided by compatriots who have already found a place in the territory. In short, no legislative or administrative conditions, nor indeed any conditions dictated by economic policy, have been brought in such as might exert pressure towards segregation, and so far there have been no signs of the formation of ghettos.

In sum, our findings show that the Bangladeshis settling in Rome have not followed the same practices of other groups of immigrants as observed in other cities and in other periods, living in fairly circumscribed areas within Europe's metropolises. Their settlement model clearly belongs to the pluralist typology: even several years after initial settlement the tendency is to continue residing in the same area or move to immediately contiguous areas that show an appreciable population of compatriots.

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