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Experience and engagement: the case of Venice

Combining text and visual research.

Supervisor
Ch. Prof. Massimo Warglien

Graduand
Sara Ajazi
873650

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To Massimo, for the patience and encouragement.

To Lorenzo, for being always by my side.

To my family, for everything they have done to make me realize my dreams.

To my friends, for all the memories I will always cherish.

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INTRODUCTION

Three perspective on Venice experience is the final result of a year of research started in March 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic first hit Italy. The thesis has a three-essey structure which reflects the intent of its final goal: to give significance to the *experience of* and *in* Venice based on three different perspective. The first chapter adress the issue by the point of view of the residents and citizens of the city during the first Italian lockdown while the second chapter takes a more economic turn focusing on the experience of remote workers and their possible role in the future of the city. Finally, in the last chapter a personal view and elaboration is introduced after analysing the myth of Venice throught history and literature. Given the exploratory nature of my work, it was natural to choose the "three essays" form instead of the more traditional "monograph" style of a thesis. The former approach enabled me to take different perspectives and use different methods to analyse in non-conventional ways the concept of the experience of the city.

The idea of this research started at the beginning of the last year, at the end of January, as I was curious about the concepts of customer engagement and customer experience which gained an increasing interest in recent academic and managerial research. In particular the first idea was to investigate the two constructs adopting a holistic and tourist journey-based prospective which at the time failed to be already designed. To summarize, customer engagement (CE) and customer experience (CX) share a cause-effect relationship in which the latter (CX) is a fundamental step for brands to reach the former (CE). The nomological networks of CE and CX where widly defined in literature but still empirical investigations where scarce. It is from there that the first elaboration made at the beginning of 2020 had as its objective the analysis of the relations between the two concepts and most importantly the definition and operationalization in a tourism and hospitality context such as the city of Venice.

Unfortunately, as we know, starting from March 2020, the propagation of the pandemic forced the world to change the rules of the game. At that point I understood that the focus of my research needed to change; I couldn't carry out an empirical research based on two construct whose definitions and features were so drastically transformed.

It was still true that experience influences engagement but what does it mean *experience of* and *in* Venice after the pandemic? The investigation carryied out during the last year was aimed at exploring dimensions of the experience of the city that were affected by the pandemic. To achieve such goal meant clarifying how the pandemic changed our approach and relationship with the place we live in and how it will look like in the future.

This required adopting a hybrid approach, that would combine different perspectives and different methods. The objective was carried out by looking at three different perspectives: the citizens of Venice in the first chapter are the protagonists of the first empirical research and the consequent text and image analysis. It allowed me to estract concepts and thoughts from people who lived in the city during the first lockdown and thus were testimonials of a never-seen-before Venice: the city without tourists. The menthod adopted was text analysis; I tried to enrich such approach by combining text analysis and image classification, to better capture the effects of the visual component of exprience.

The second perspective relates to a category of workers that increased exponentially beacuse of the Covid-19 pandemic; remote workers. "Workers from anywhere" dissociate the place in which they work from the location of their employers. They offer unique opportunities for historical cities to become hosts of a very contemporary form of work. The question posed in the second chapter is simple: could remote workers solve Venice's issue of the decreasing number of residents and contribute to its renewal? The chapter is based on semi-structured inteviews methodology: I conducted in-depth interviews with a sample of foreign citizens that have established Venice as a temporary residence. I conducted a qualitative analysis of the experience of the city by such newly acquired or temporary residents of Venice.

The third and final chapter takes a more personal and introspective point of view. As an "adopted citizen", I found that Venice is a complex city that however has much more to offer than it could look like. I wanted to incorporate this point of view with the use of images and photographs that functioned as a mean to schematize a possible definition of my experience of Venice; a definition based on binary contrasts that takes insipiration from Levi Strauss strucuturalism theory applied to mythology. His theory served as a basis for my application: my own experience of the myth of Venice. The approach combines again images and text.

Being this chapter an introspective analysis of experience, and given my professional experience as a photographer, I organized an online "exhibition" of photographs I shot in the last years organized by Levi Strauss's binary oppositions principle, and reconstructed textually a comment on such binary oppositions.

To rethink experience in this particular historical period is to rethink the future.

CHAPTER I – THE EXPERIENCE OF VENICE FROM THE FIRST ITALIAN LOCKDOWN

"You will know a word by the company it keeps"

R.Firth

1.1 Introduction

Starting from March 8, 2020 Italy faced the first European lockdown to try to stop the spread of the new global pandemic. The enemy was quite new at the time; the first news from China arrived in the Occidental side of the world at the end of December 2019 but no one could have imagined the magnitude of the consequences. Citizens had a quite positive attitude during the first national lockdown and in Venice in particular news about the clean canals and "reborn" natural life reached an international audience.

An empty Gran Canal view in Venice, due to the coronavirus Emergency most of the canals are without any traffic in Venice, Italy on March 15, 2020 during the Coronavirus Emergency.
SOURCE: GIACOMO COSUA/NURPHOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES

Water in Venice Canals Goes Crystal Clear Amidst Coronavirus Lockdown

BY **SOPHIE HIRSH**

MAR. 17 2020, PUBLISHED 12:00 P.M. ET

Figure 1 - Online article at Greenmatters.com

However, it didn't take a lot of time for worries and negative prediction of economic consequences of the pandemic to be discussed. In particular for a tourist city like Venice the negative effects were predicted quite rapidly.

The experience of and in Venice, before the pandemic years, could exempt from the presence of thousands of visitors crowding the streets (or better *calli*) of the city. The experience of a touristic city in general is clearly different compared to little towns and perceptions change accordingly. The pandemic however changed the rules of the game; for the first time, Venice lost its main profit-generator sector and the few residents of the city were the only ones to walk around. This otherwise unfortunate situation gave the opportunity to research the feeling, sensations and opinions of those few people that witnessed the experience of one of the most touristic cities of Italy, without its main feature: tourism.

The objective of this first chapter is thus to capture this particular experience from the point of view of people that spent the first Italian lockdown of March 2020 in Venice. In order to reach this goal, the choice was made to analyze texts and images that were produced by the respondents.

In April 2020, right after the end of the lockdown, a file with the request was advertised through WOM (Word of Mouth), online articles and Facebook groups' posts, asking to send a picture taken during the lockdown and a related text explaining the reason of that choice and a little description of the sensations, thoughts and feeling about Venice during the lockdown.

The request was submitted in Italian and the full original text can be found at the end of the thesis in Appendix A while the translation is shown below.

"In the last months, due to the coronavirus emergency, many things have changed in our lives, one of which is the relationship we have with the city of Venice and the way we perceive it. Please select a photograph you took starting from the beginning of the emergency (or alternatively you can take one) that represents your perception of Venice in the last month. The photograph must represent a thought, feeling or sensation. Its quality and artistic value are not relevant in the choice [of the photograph]. The only request is to contextualize the photograph in an environment outside your home. In addition, it is asked to accompany the photograph with a written text that expresses, with at least two sentences, the reason why you chose that image and the story behind it [...]".

The reason behind this method of research stands in the important element of unbiased characteristic of the answers. A multichoice questionnaire, for example, wouldn't give enough opportunity to the respondents to answer freely and argument their choices. Moreover, an open request minimizes the possibilities to influence respondents' thought. On the other hand, a face to face interview was not suitable as it could have limited the number of the final valid answers. At the end of the summer 62 images and related texts were collected.

The analysis then carried out used the various texts submitted to create clusters of words that represent a concept and, together with their associated images, produced a scheme of the thoughts and perception of people who lived in Venice during one of the most unique global events of the century.

1.2 Analysis

The analysis consisted in a two-step research approach, firstly a text analysis was carried out and then the associations with the images were made.

In the text analysis phase the choice made was to create associations between words in a sentence creating a network of co-occurrences.

At the beginning, a TXT file was created containing all the texts sent by the respondents that was then processed using Mathematica programming language to obtain the above-mentioned weighted symmetric networks of words[1]. The creation of this networks is based on the distributional similarity principle that states that certain words can be related to each other because they result related to one same word. For example, if we have the following two sentences:

1. *"schedule a test drive and investigate Honda's financial options"*
2. *"the Jeep reminded me of a recent drive"*

Honda and *Jeep* are related to each other because they appear all near the word *drive*. Mathematically speaking, when two words "have the same company" of words, it means that they have similar associations. Co-occurrence matrice were transformed in adjacency matrices. Their corresponding graph representations are fundamental concepts that need to

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[1] Algorithms useful to the task were elaborated in collaboration with the supervisor

be explained in order to have a holistic view of the logic behind the text analysis and consequent formation of the final networks of words that will be also defined as *communities*.

1.2.1 Adjacency matrix and co-occurrences matrix

The adjacency matrix is a square matrix that will be used to then graphically represents the connections between words inside a context with a graph. The columns and rows of the matrix are represented by the words inside our analyzed text. If we take, for example, into consideration two arrays D and Q which are respectively, D = "cat, dog, dog" and Q = "cat, dog, mouse, mouse"; the related adjacency matrix will be the following, where the three dimensions are represented by the words *"cat"* (C), *"dog"* (D) and *"mouse"* (M):

$$
\begin{array}{c|ccc}
 & C & D & M \\
\hline
C & 0 & 2 & 1 \\
D & 2 & 0 & 1 \\
M & 1 & 1 & 0 \\
\end{array}
$$

For example, the words *"cat"* and *"dog"* are present in the same sentences (which is our context) twice while the words *"cat"* and *"mouse"* are connected with each other (i.e. are in the same context) once. The cells of the matrix will be then fulfilled with the frequency by which a pair of words is "seen together"; these elements will then indicate whether couples of vertices in the graph are adjacent or not.

Therefore, for a simple graph with vertex set $U = \{u_1, \ldots, u_n\}$, the adjacency matrix is a square n × n matrix A such that its element A_{ij} is one when there is an edge from vertex u_i to vertex u_j, and zero when there is no edge (Biggs & Norman, 1993). The diagonal elements of the matrix will be all zero since in the case of text analysis there will be no loops, meaning a vertex of the graph that is connected with itself.

For graph representation the adjacency matrix will be a matrix with weighted edges and the graph represented is an undirect graph (graph *a* in Figure 2) which means that the direction

of the connections between the vertexes is a bilateral connection and not a unilateral one as in a direct graph (graph *b* in Figure 2).
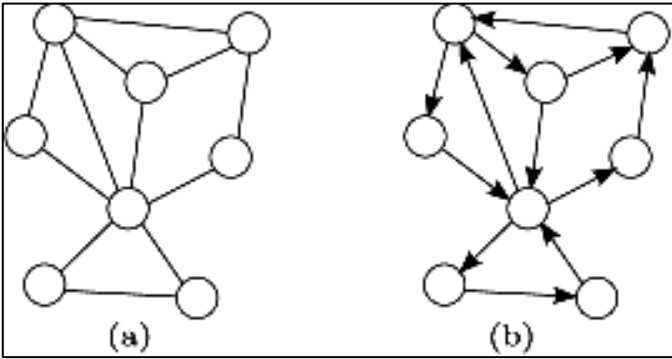

Figure 2 – Undirect graph (a) vs direct graph (b)

Going back to the previous example, the correspondent undirect graph of the adjacency matrix will be the following:
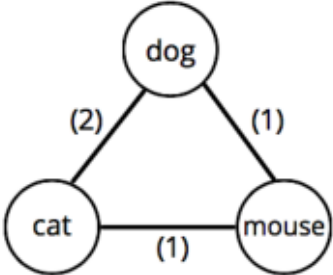
Figure 3 - Example's undirect graph with weighted edges

In text analysis the concept of the adjacency matrix is translated into the "co-occurrences matrix". The occurrences are quantities that result in the counting of the times in which a lexical unity (LU), for example a word, can be found in a corpus or context unit (CU). Moreover, the co-occurrences are quantities that result from the counting of the number of times two or more lexical units are at the same time found in the same elementary context (EC), for example a sentence. In the co-occurrences matrix the cells represent the quantity of a pair of lexical units' co-occurrences. In other words, the total number of the elementary contexts in which they are found together (i.e. their frequency as a pair). In this particular text analysis, whom process and steps will be later explained, the co-occurrences matrix is used as a weighted adjacency matrix, that corresponds in the graphical representation to a

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final weighted network of words that are connected in various systems that we will call communities. A community represent a concept and following the previously explained logic what will be shown in the results will be the most cited concepts inside the texts sent by the respondents. The aim is now clear; through text analysis ideas, thoughts and sensations of 60 people about Venice during the lockdown will be schematized as to understand which are the strongest arguments around the topic.

1.3 The process

The first step of the process consisted in the mere text analysis while during the second step the images collected were included and the final undirected weighted graph connected both textual and visual elements. The two different parts of the analysis will be explained in the next paragraphs, followed by the related final results.

For the first part of the text analysis the answers collected were gathered in one document, the *corpus*, and the first important steps included the "cleaning phase". From the raw imported document were removed the so-called stop-words which are words that taken alone have no direct semantic value such as for example, words like: "and"; "or"; "of" etc. It is important to clean the text from this particular category of words so the final graphs resulting from the process will not be weighed down. Moreover, symbols are also eliminated from the text except for the "." symbol which will be used to define the EC (i.e. sentences). The consequent result will be a set of words useful to be analyzed in order to build the co-occurrence matrix built as a weighted adjacency matrix. If we take for example a document composed of the following three different sentences A, B, C:

A: *"Living in Venice is stressful."*
B: *"I like living in Venice."*
C: *"My University is in Venice."*

The cleaned corpus will then be:

```
[Venice, stressful. like, living, Venice. University, is,
                    Venice.]
```

After the cleaning phase, the co-occurrence matrix needs to be built and in the case of the above-mentioned example, it will result in a *n x n* with *n=6* (number of unique words) symmetrical weighted adjacency matrix (E) as shown below:

	Venice	stressful	like	living	University	is
Venice	0	1	1	2	1	2
stressful	1	0	0	1	0	1
like	1	0	0	1	0	0
living	2	1	1	0	0	1
University	1	0	0	0	0	1
is	2	1	0	1	1	0

Figure 4 – Co-occurrence matrix

Each cell represents the frequency of the pair of words which means, for example, that the word Venice and the word living have been seen together twice in the document taken into consideration. Then, starting from the adjacency matrix built, the graphic representation is built.

The process at this point will give as a result a graph quite large and dense; all the words inside the texts will be considered and will form various communities. In order to interpret the graph in the most significative way, a *graph filtration* (Carlsson & Gunnar, 2009) is

needed. In fact, for the purpose of the study, the most significative connections need to be taken into consideration. A large graph containing all the words does not give a clear idea of the common topics written by the respondents while an excessive narrowing of the graph gives little insight about the experience of and in Venice during the pandemic.

The perfect "spot", the one right in the middle between inclusion and clarity, is found by varying a cutoff threshold along the range of graph weights. This value goes from 0, where the filtered graph corresponds exactly to the original graph, to 1, where all the ties are eliminated (Figure 5).
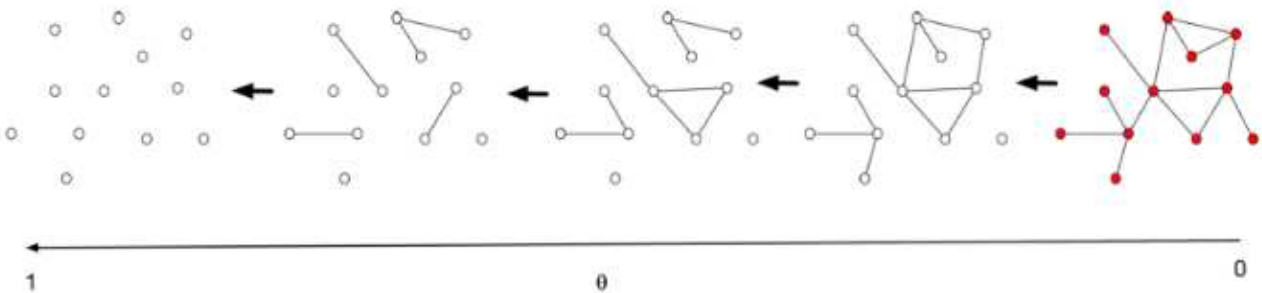

Figure 5 - Graph configurations

The structure of a text is typically represented by a curve called *g-signature*, which shows a common configuration of books and documents; Figure 6 is an example of this curve for the book *The Scarlet Letter written* by Nathaniel Hawthorne (Tripodi & Warglien, 2020).
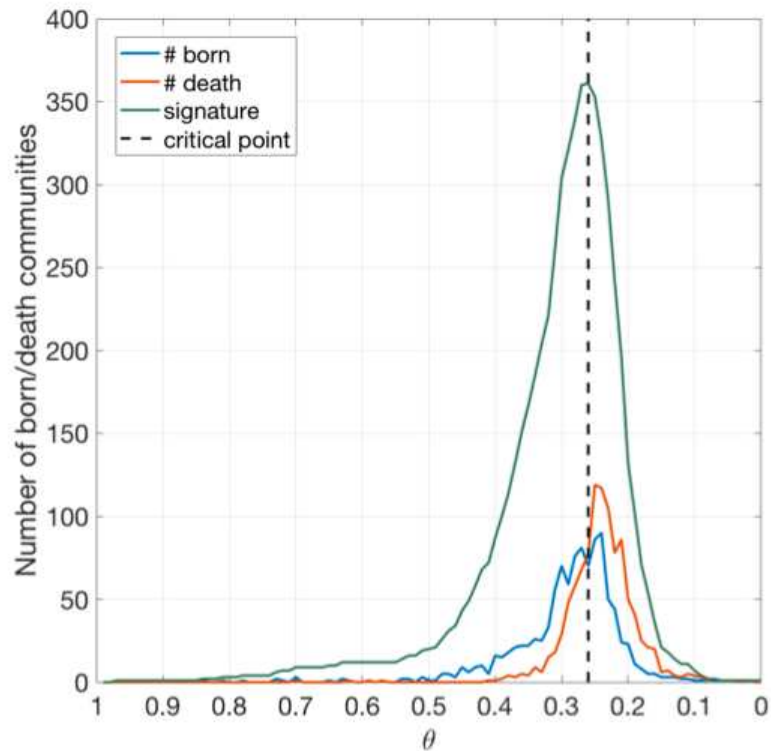
Figure 6 – Example of a g-signature curve (Tripodi & Warglien, 2020).

This curve gives important information about the maximum number of components that can be filtered and it corresponds to its peak. The x-axis θ shows the different values of the cutoff coefficient while the y-axes represents the number of the components. Considering the highest value of the coefficient, the left part of the curve gives strongest connections between words (indeed, the origin of the graph is 1) while in the right part, ties are weaker and the final resulting graph will show dispersed edges all connected by, without semantically significative networks of words.

The filtration of the text considers the strongest ties in it and includes the highest possible number of components which correspond to a connected group of at least 2 nodes (i.e. words). A filtration of a network is thus the set of unweighted subnetworks obtained by varying a weight threshold θ below which edges (i.e. words) are removed (Carlsson & Gunnar, 2009). The threshold θ* captures the maximum number of separable structures in the network which are the communities of words that in this chapter represent concepts.

The second step of the process involved the association of the images collected with their text. The objective was to connect a visual reference to the words written by the respondents looking for patterns between them. In order to transform the images into something readable for the software and the logic behind text analysis, they needed to be codified as to obtain words useful for the analysis of their relationships with the written text. Three images received during the research phase are shown below as to better explain the process of allocation of tags which was hand-made.

A   B   C

Tags were assigned in order to have the right amount of words identifying what was present inside the pictures. Initially, a list of the most important elements of all the photographs was written, then the most significative ones were picked. The final tags selected were divided in pairs of opposites. The first image (A) for example was defined with the tags *bw, animals, detail, mainly street, landmark*; the second one (B) with the tags *colors, empty street, open space, landmark* and the third one (C) with the tags *mainly water, empty canal, fondamenta, not landmark.*

After classifying the different images by identifying tags, the process of text analysis was implemented adding the various tags for each image at the beginning of the correspondent text to enable the connection between the visual response to the written one. The final results of both the "pure" text analysis and the combination of texts and images are shown in the following section.

1.4 Results

Following the previously explained procedure, the final outcome of the analysis consists in the graphical representation of clusters of words that form what will be called "communities". They are in fact the depiction of "concepts", words are put together because of their correlation and thus because they are part of a repeated association in the thoughts and opinion of the respondents. It is noteworthy to say that the final chosen communities of words have been selected as to extract the strongest associations. A filtering procedure has been used which at the end brought to 500 selected words.

The same process has been run both with the document including all the texts with and without the images related to them.

Considering only the text analysis, the following image (Figure 7) shows the final outcomes. In particular, all the communities derived from the analysis are shown in the graph. As the analysis will further proceed in a more detailed manner, the general graph shown below will undergo an additional process of screening which will give an elaborated outcome for each one of the detachable communities (all graphs resulting from the analysis are shown in Appendix B). It is important to note, as to avoid confusion, that the colors of the graphs shown are chosen by the program.
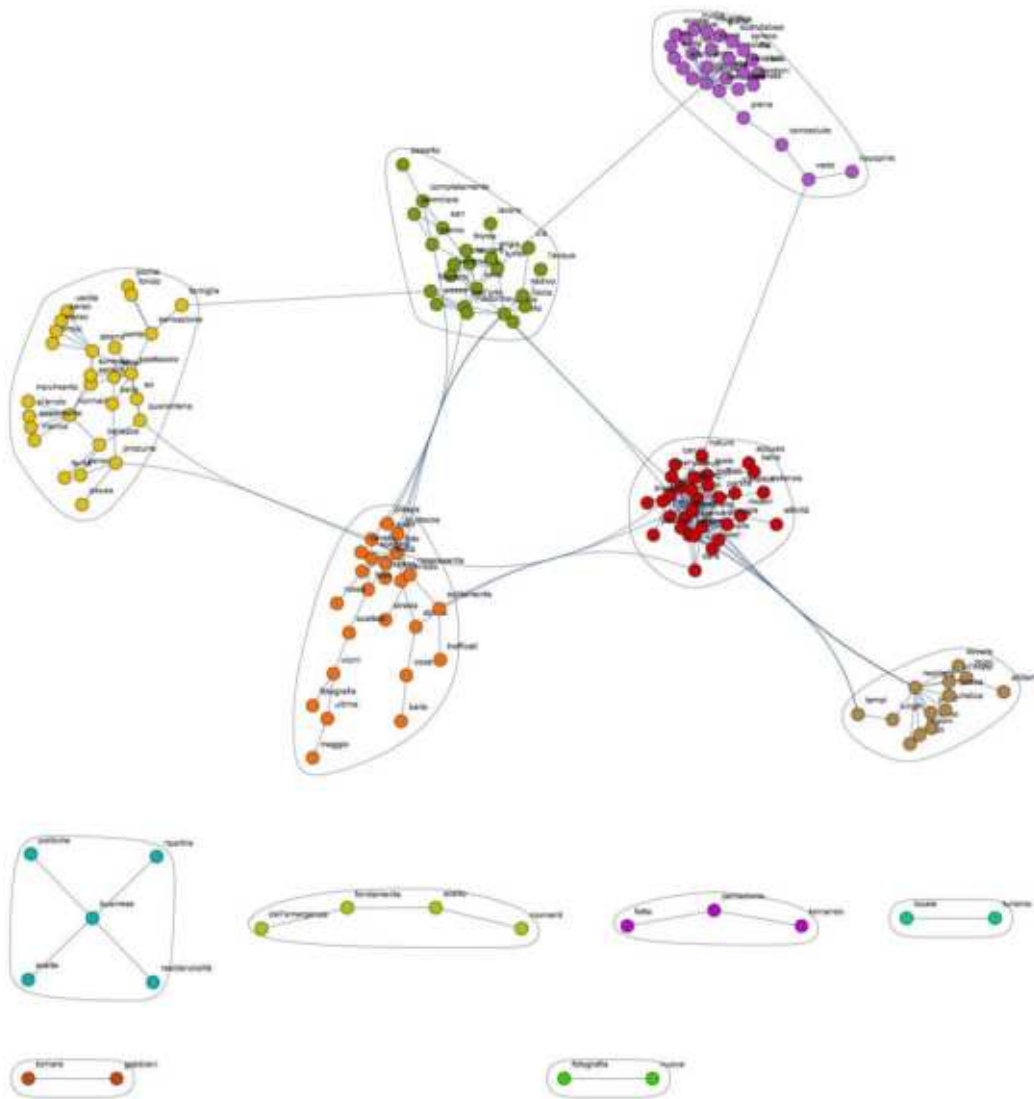
1.4.1 Text analysis

As it is possible to see, some communities have a higher number of words correlated while some others have just a couple of words. In the latter case, communities composed of very few words, aren't significant enough to detect a clear concept thus will not be further analyzed.

If we take for example the community composed of 5 words, the graph with light blue edges in the bottom-left part of the image, it is already possible to detach some interesting connections. The graph, which is zoomed in Figure 8, contains in fact the words *"politiche"* (policies), *"ripartire"* (restart), *"scelte"* (choices), *"business"* and *"residenzialità"* (residency) are clearly insights to an already well-known issue of the city.

Figure 8 - Detail of a community

In fact, Venice problems with over-tourism and lack of residents have been discussed for decades and are still at this day the most problematic challenges the city has to face. Indeed, it is not at all surprising to find concern in the texts of the respondents about this topic. The year 2020 brought Venice to face for the first time ever since its foundation, the absence of the tourist flows. This event forced its citizens to witness the answer of one often mentioned question *"how 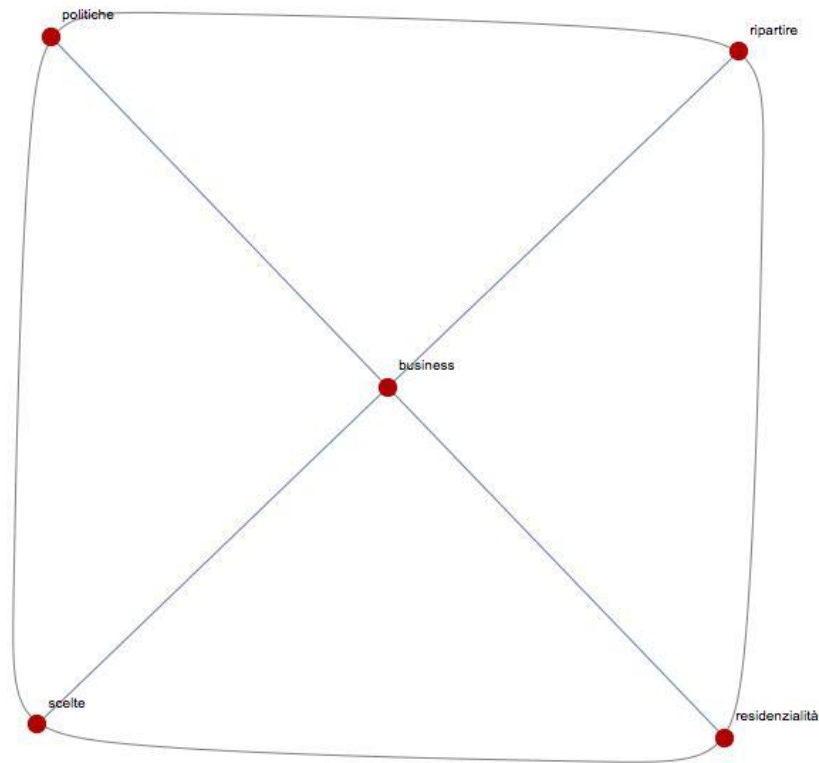would you think Venice would look like without so many tourists in the streets?"*. The main goal of this chapter was hence, to know what its citizens think about the city being so empty; which are the negative and positive consequences of the pandemic? One for sure is the possibility given to rethink about Venice's economic and social structure. It is indicative and noteworthy the word *"ripartire"*, restart. It represents the intention of starting over from something that was before in a certain way and changing it into something new but more importantly, something different. The word is correlated to the three main issues associated with the over-tourism problem of the city: policies, business and residency. They together are the key to the change. Policies should be made to create a different business model for the city which has to be based on the creation of value brought by increasing the number of residents and citizens.

Regarding the same concept, another graph emerged, with similar words but with a different composition (Figure 9).
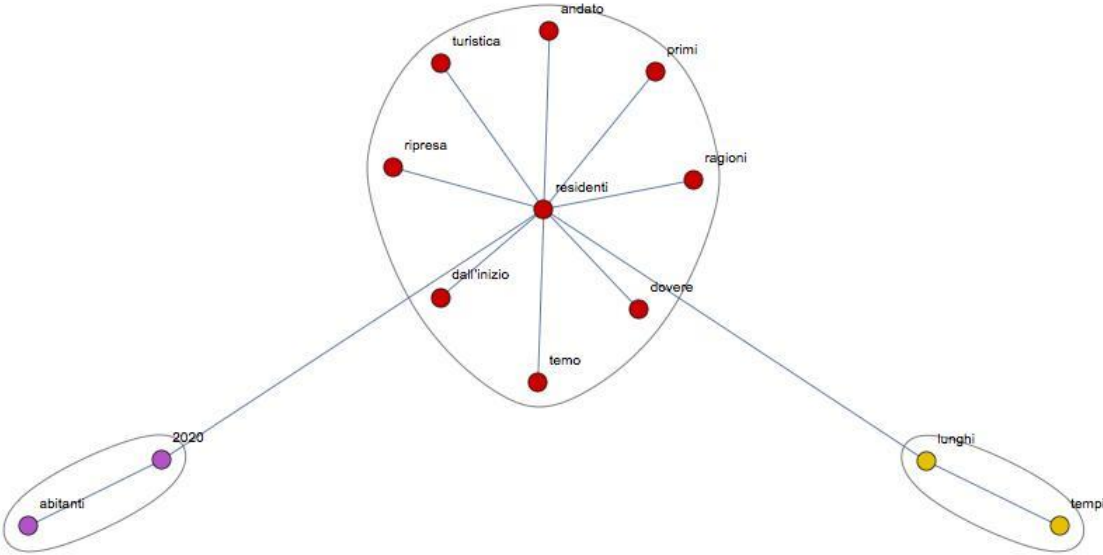
Figure 9 - Detail of the second community analyzed

As for the previously described community, also this one, that corresponds to the graph in the bottom right part of Figure 7, has as a key and central word *residenti* (i.e. residents).

Another significant cluster of words is represented by the community in the left side of Figure 7, the one with yellow edges. Given its density it is not possible to clearly depict all the words that are present inside the group, thus a further analysis is needed. Figure 10 shown below shows what is included in the "yellow community".
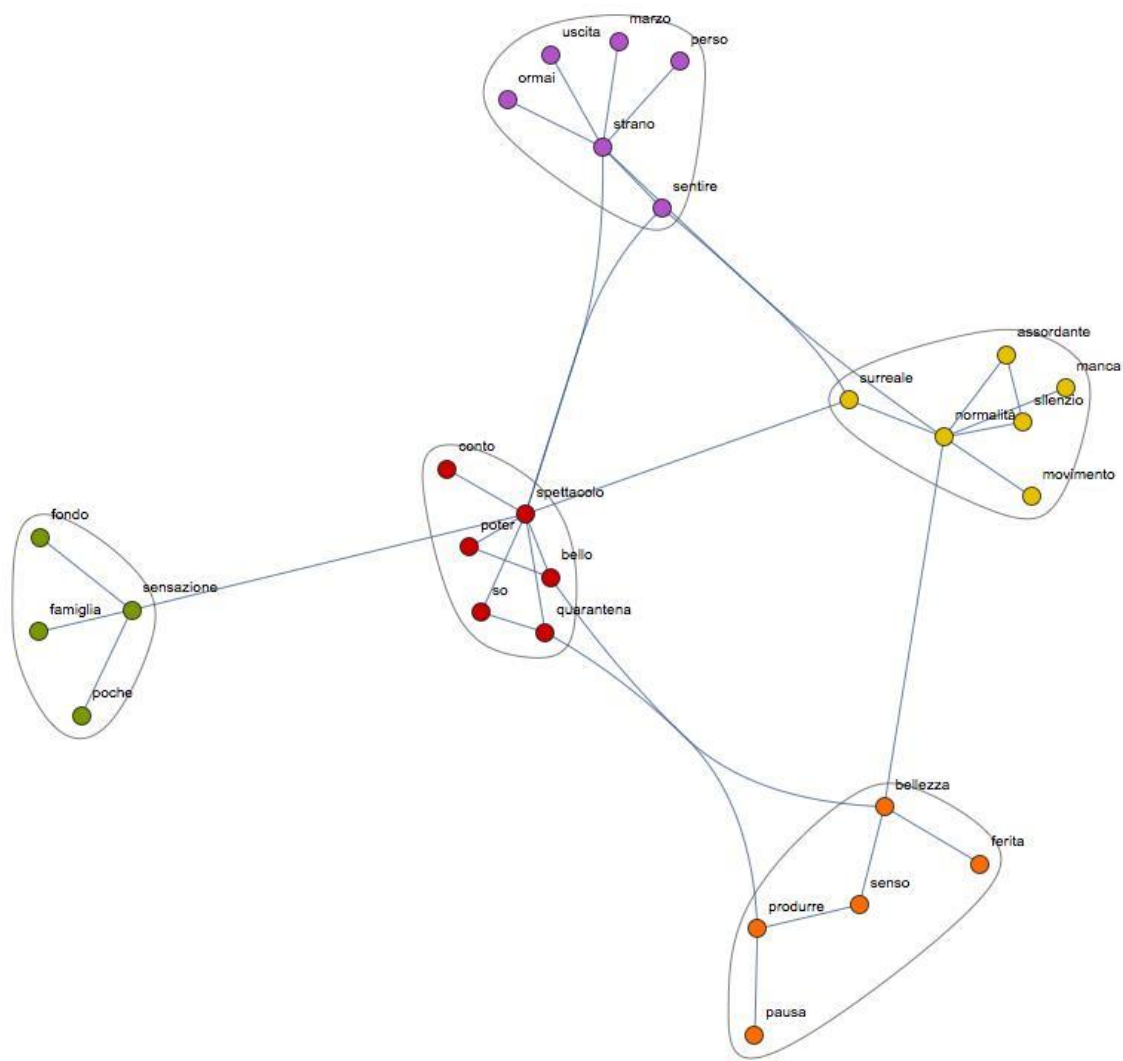
Figure 10 - The "yellow community"

In this cluster it is possible to identify a group of words that represent in a way the sensitive sphere. Words such as *strano* (strange), *sensazione* (sensation), *bellezza* (beauty), *silenzio* (silence), *movimento* (movement), *surreale* (surreal), *spettacolo* (spectacle), *sentire* (to feel) are all connected to the emotional side of the respondents' stories. What emerges in fact is the feeling of something that is at the same time a new beautiful but strange situation and a melancholic sentiment. There is a *sense of hurt beauty* of Venice, which is an oxymoron in a sense. Another one can be found in the little community of words in the right side of the graph, which is *silenzio assordante* i.e. deafening silence. Again, in the same community another contraposition of terms stands out which is *normalità surreale* that can be translated as surreal normality.

This community of words can then be classified and interpreted as the concept emerged from the texts which describes the emotional and sensorial aspects of the historical event lived by the respondents. The emotional and sensorial side is however characterized by contradictions and oxymorons: on one hand, they seem to in a way to enjoy this reborn and unfamiliar view of the city but on the other, there is an inevitable consciousness of the unfortunate cause of this extraordinary event.

A similar outcome can be found in Figure 11 shown below; this graph corresponds to the upper right graph with purple edges in Figure 7. However, in this particular case the concept and argument seems to be more focused on the astonishment aspect of having the opportunity to see Venice this empty.
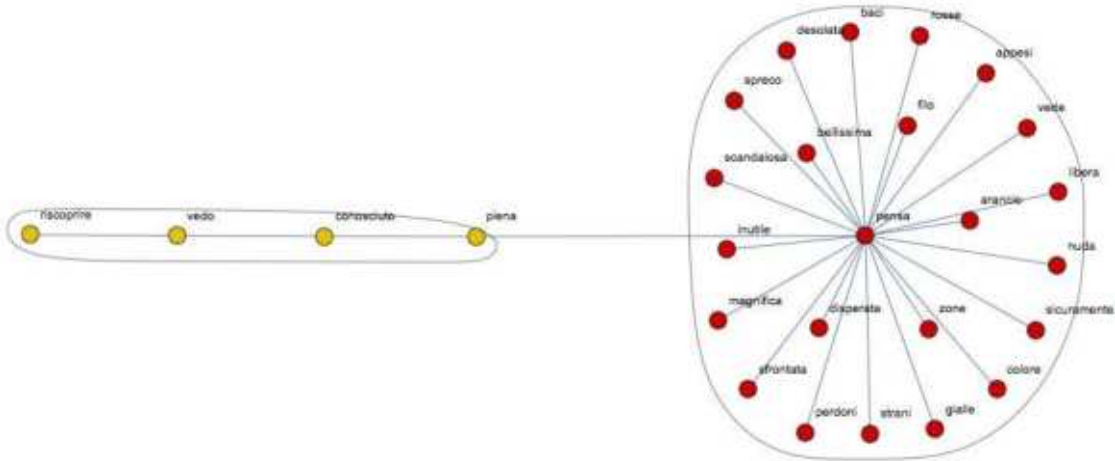
Figure 11 - Detail of a community

Another cluster of words identified in Figure 7 which gives some interesting insights is the community with the green edges which is also shown below in a more detailed layout (Figure 12).
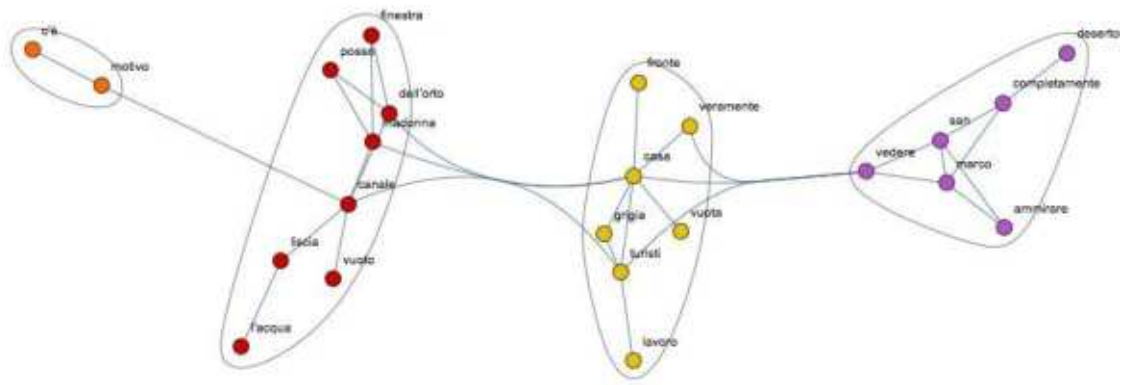
Figure 12 - Detail of a community

In this communities it is possible to find three different hypothetical locations, *Madonna dell'Orto*, *casa* (home) and *San Marco*, all related to the concept of emptiness. In fact, there are words such as *vuoto*, *vuota* and *deserto* which all mean empty, an argument at the center of the discussion during the first Italian quarantine of March and April 2020.

One of the most interesting communities that emerged from the analysis is shown in the image below (Figure 13) and is indicated in Figure 7 with the graph with red edges.
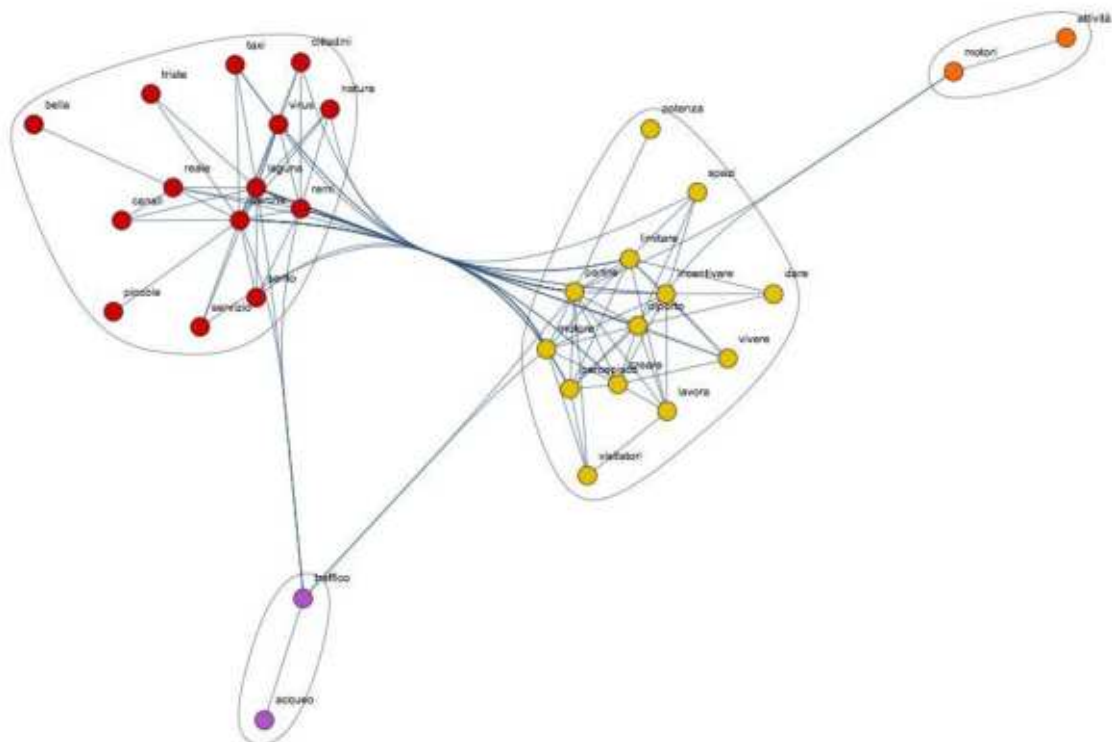
Figure 13 – Community

This community is all about the concept related to water, nature and canals. In fact, it couldn't be any different. Venice and water have always had a special connection; the city was built on water and what brought gloriousness and richness to the *Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia* derived from the sea. Its citizens built their daily life around water, they walk everyday surrounded by it and they commute to work via *vaporetto* instead of trams or cars as in any other Italian city. Water is a core element of the city and its canals are the brand element of it. This unexpected change almost stopped life around water, leaving the canals of Venice almost empty for weeks, and it couldn't pass unnoticed the incredible silence in the city and their clearness. It seems anyway that in this group of communities there is more concern than joy around the theme.

1.4.2 Text analysis paired with image classification

The last step of the process involved the classification of the images collected with tags identifying the content of the photographs. For each tag, the same process of text analysis was carried out, finding the connections between them (thus on characteristic of the pictures) and the related texts. The most significant outcomes regard the words/tags *empty, landmark,* and *water.*

Empty is a particularly important tag since the majority of the photographs submitted were characterized by the presence of an empty canal or an empty street. Even in the previous analysis based only on the text part of the submission, the concept of empty was fairly present and associated with words such as *beautiful, free* or *to admire* but also with words such as *nude, grey* and *desperate.*
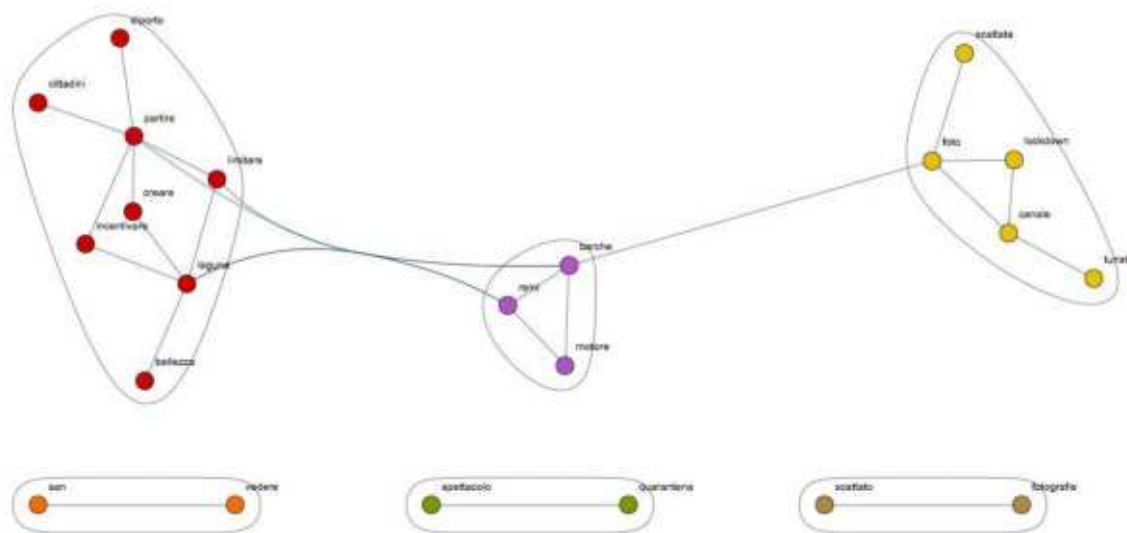
Figure 14 - Empty community

Figure 14 shows the final outcome of the process of comparing and associating the word *empty* with the document containing all the texts. Thus, images that captured empty canals or streets were primarily associated with concepts surrounding the *water world* of the city. This is confirmed by looking at the graph and identifying words such as *barche, remi, canale* and *laguna.* The emptiness that was the main characteristic of the first Italian lockdown was felt by citizens living in Venice mainly related with the venetian canals being silence and free from waves which are usually created by the continuous alternation of boats passing through them. The absence of traffic in the *rii* is something that almost never happened in Venice, a city that have always built its life around water and maritime activities.

Words such as *turisti* and *San* (which was supposedly correlated with Marco as to indicate the most famous venetian square) bring us again to the concepts associated with over-tourism. Citizens and residents are clearly surprised to see their city this empty.

In the left part of the graph, finally, is it possible to detach a group of words that rotate around the discussion of what could possibly be the future of the city. Words such as *creare, cittadini, partire, incentivare* are part of a common desire for Venice's future; a future that should start from policies aimed to increment the number of services for its citizens with the goal of increasing Venice's number of residents (the discussion around this issue will be further implemented in the following chapters).

If we look at the graph representing the associations between the world *water* and its correspondent texts (Figure 15), it is possible to confirm the same concept found in the previous graph.
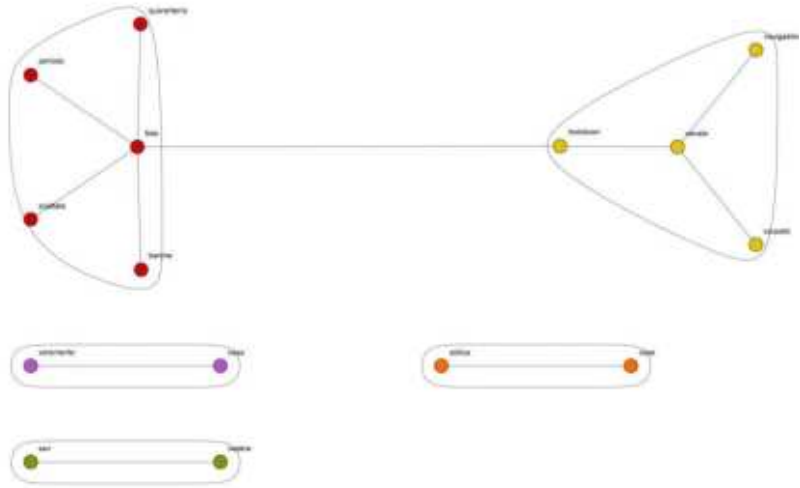
Figure 15 - Water community

It is, in fact, a quite simple graph which can be synthesized in one simple outcome sentence; respondents seem to have written that the picture was taken during the lockdown (left part of the graph) and it shows how the Italian lockdown caused the canals to be navigable (right part of the graph).

The most interesting and explicative graph resulted from the analysis is the one that unites the word *landmark* with the associated text (Figure 16). A considerable rate of photographs, in fact, were taken either in San Marco square or were showing the Rialto Bridge which are undoubtedly the two most famous and worldwide recognized spots of the city. Venetian citizens during pre-COVID times, typically tended to avoid such areas because they were crowded with massive flows of tourists. However, the pandemic and the national lockdown enables Venice's landmarks to be seen without thousands of people and surrounded by a total silence.
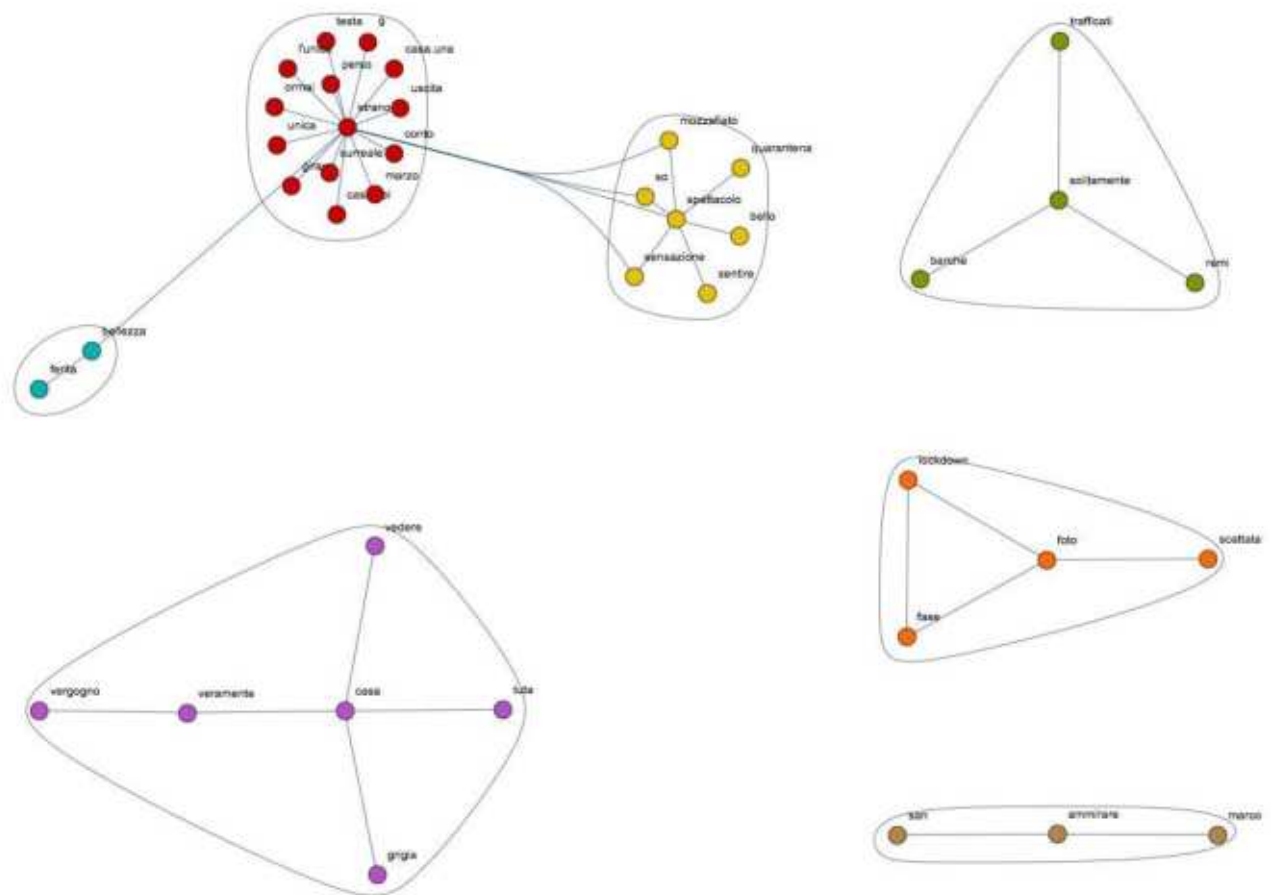
Figure 16 - Landmark community

What is significative about this graph is that it is really simple to be interpreted and contains different concepts that emerged in the text analysis shown in the first part of the "results" section; in fact, it is possible to detach arguments around San Marco square (bottom right part of the graph) and about the water under Rialto bridge (upper right part of the graph) which usually is jammed with boats. Moreover, on the upper left part, the argument rotates again around the sensations and the more emotional part of that period. In the yellow part it is possible to see words such as *mozzafiato, bello* and *spettacolo* that clearly show positive feelings. On the other hand, in the red mini-graph the word *strano* is at the center of the concept, showing a slightly more preoccupied sentiment. Finally, the micro light blue graph in the left side is representative of the already explained analysis about the mixed feelings and opposites thoughts about the event; Venice shows its wounded beauty.

CHAPTER II – TEMPORARY CITIZENS AND THEIR EXPERIENCE OF VENICE

"If I were not King of France, I would choose to be a citizen of Venice"
Henry III

FIRST PART

2.1 Introduction

Shifting the focus to a more economic point of view, we cannot discuss the experience in Venice without taking into consideration the inevitable consequences Covid-19 pandemic had and will continue to have on the city's eco-system.

It is not new to anyone who is interested in Venice's issues and future that the city faced problems strictly related with the so-called "over-tourism". Over the last years many papers have been published as to better understand the situation of the city, the numbers of the problem and the different cause-effect relationships surrounding the issue. On the other hand, at the beginning of 2020, the world was beginning to know more about this new unwanted guest, Covid-19, and by the end of the summer and the start of a new wave of the pandemic, the gravity of the situation was clear to everyone. One of the most impacted sectors is clearly the tourism sector as it was impossible for people to travel during lockdowns and in general the fear of the disease slowed down sharply the propensity to travel. Venice main income derives exactly from this sector; shops and services were built in the past decades to satisfy the tourists demand and needs, starting to put the city in a dangerous path dependence relationship. It took a sudden jolt for decision-makers involved to truly become aware of the mistake.

In this chapter I will analyze the experience of Venice taking into consideration the remote workers point of view. The aim is to understand which elements are involved as to build a scheme useful for assessing which are the triggers for remote workers that may lead to the

decision of becoming a citizen of the city. This analysis could be part of the solution of Venice's issue related to over-tourism; understanding what brings value to this category of workers could be used to attract them in the city to possibly make a transition to temporary citizens of the city. The chapter will be dived into two main section; the first one defining the main concepts and giving a dimension and evaluation of the phenomenon while the second part consists in a qualitative research based on semi- structured interviews.

2.2 Remote working

Since the beginning of the pandemic there has been an exponential interest on the potential of home-based work as shown in the graphs below. Different terms have been selected to show data, given the fact that in Italy, "smart working" is the term mistakenly used to identify home-based work which corresponds to what is correctly defined as "working from home" (WFH) or remote working or telecommuting. As it is possible to see in Figure 17, the worldwide interest has constantly increased over the last five years with a notable peak during the beginning of the pandemic. In Italy the same trend is confirmed (Figure 18).
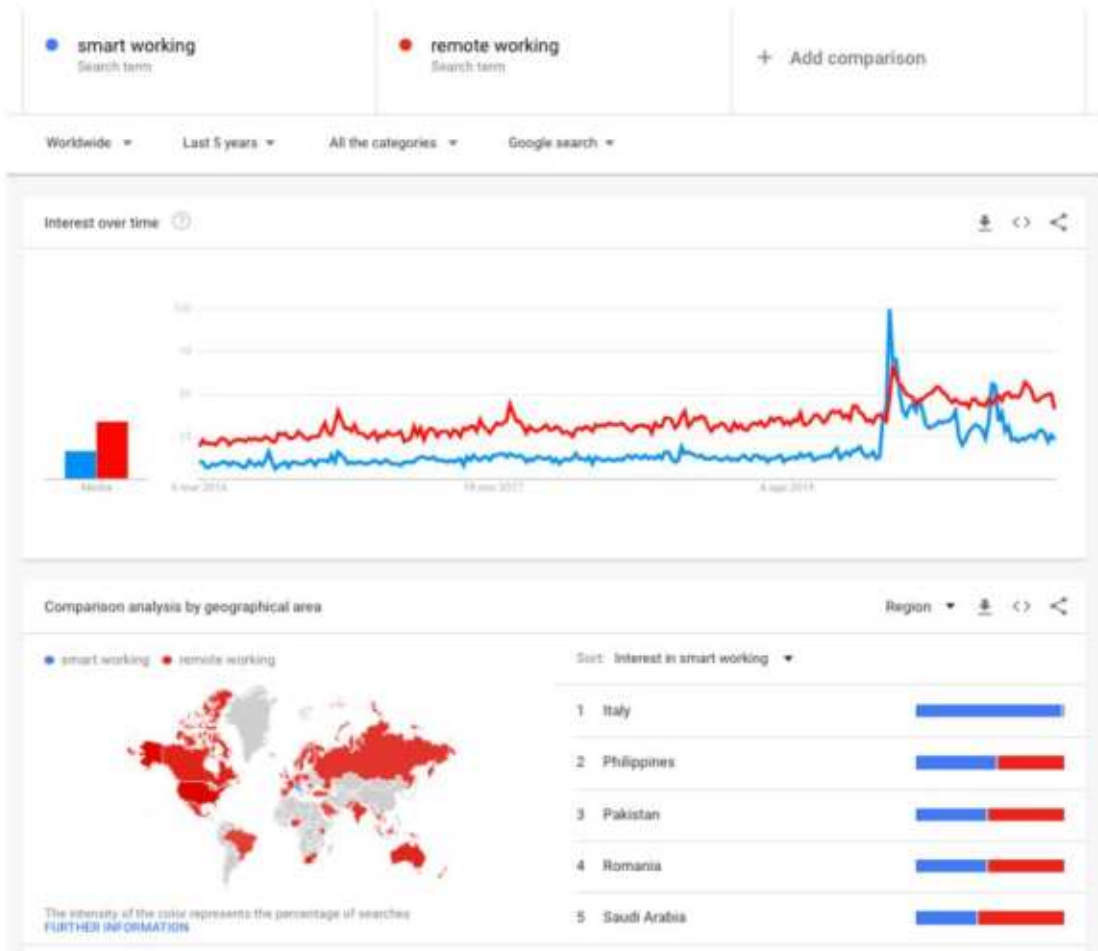
Figure 17 - Google trends worldwide comparison
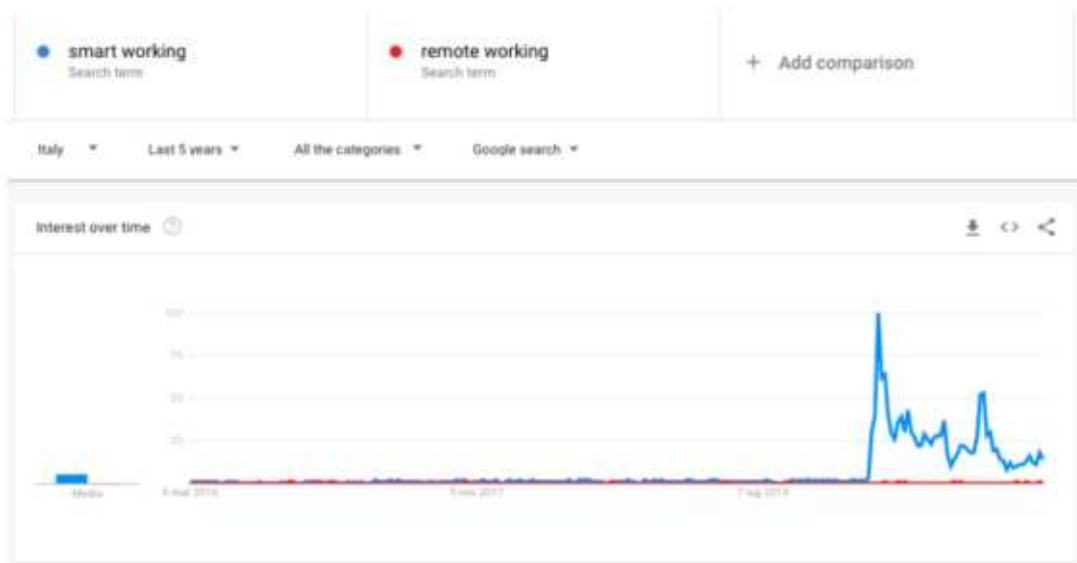
Figure 18 - Google trends comparisons only in Italy

2.2.1 A matter of definitions

A clarification of the different terms cited above is needed before continuing in the analysis and as to avoid conceptual misunderstandings. Remote working, defined also as telecommuting or telework, typically identified as WFH policies in the business side, includes all workers who, both part-time or full-time, "eschew physical offices in favor of their homes coworking spaces, or other community locations [...] with the expectation that they would come into the office periodically" (Choudhury, 2020).

Terms	Definitions
Remote working or telecommuting or telework or Work From Home (WFH)	All the terms indicate workers who, both part-time or full-time, work from a venue different from their company's offices but periodically have the duty to come to their offices.
Smart working	The term describes an internal organizational model adopted by the company which allows flexibility. This could or could not involve WFH practices.
Work From Anywhere (WFA)	The term adds geographical flexibility to the concept of WFH. Workers not only work from a different venue than their company's offices but are also allowed to live in a different city or country.

Table 1 - Table of definitions

Smart working, term used in Italy to represent work-from-home activities, has in fact a different meaning; it is defined as "a set of modern and not-conventional organizational models that are characterized by high flexibility in the choice of the working spaces, time and tools, and that provides all employees of an organization with the best working conditions to accomplish their tasks" (Gastaldi, et al., 2014). Smart working thus, indicates a working mode that, thanks to tools and better organized processes, leaves more flexibility and enables a "smarter" organizational model which is quite different from identifying workers that shifted their usual work-space from the office to home. Moreover, remote working, WFH and teleworking, despite typically being used for the same purpose, present some differences in the notion. In particular, remote working can be considered the broader concept; it

describes, as said before, the situation in which workers carry out their tasks to a different worksite. On the other hand, telework usually "implies the use of personal electronic devices, such as computers, tablet or mobile phones" and is associated to employees only while the concept of WFH is unrelated to the usual place where the work is carried out (for example, the office) and refers to both dependent and independent workers (Sostero, et al., 2020)

2.3 The potential of WFH

Undoubtedly, we can consider 2020 as the year of the widespread of remote working. The pandemic forced companies to adopt measures in order to keep the working environment a safe place and they were thus forced to build the right infrastructure to allow employees to continue their jobs from home. However, not every country and not every business can adopt WFH practices without problems. Some jobs require physical presence and in other cases companies were not ready to quickly adopt these measures. Thus, how many jobs can be actually made from home?

2.3.1 Worldwide potential

According to a study research made by Berg J., Bonnet F. and Soares S. (2020) which estimates the potential teleworking worldwide, 18% of workers involved in the Delphi questionnaires have occupations or live in countries where they could possibly perform their work from home, as shown in Table 2.

The graph shows the differences between low-income, middle-income and high-income countries and take into consideration both changes in occupational structures (for example, in middle-income and low-income, workers are usually employed in occupations that cannot be done from home) and social-physical-information technology infrastructure (i.e. infrastructures needed for worker to implement their jobs from home). The light bars show the differences if both factors are taken into consideration while the darker bars indicate the variations that are caused only by countries' differences in occupation structures.

The survey also identifies regional variation and according to its estimates, 30% circa of North-American and Western European could work from home while the percentage is drastically lower for other regions; 6% for sub-Saharan African workers, 8% for South Asian, 23% for Latin American and 18% for Eastern European.
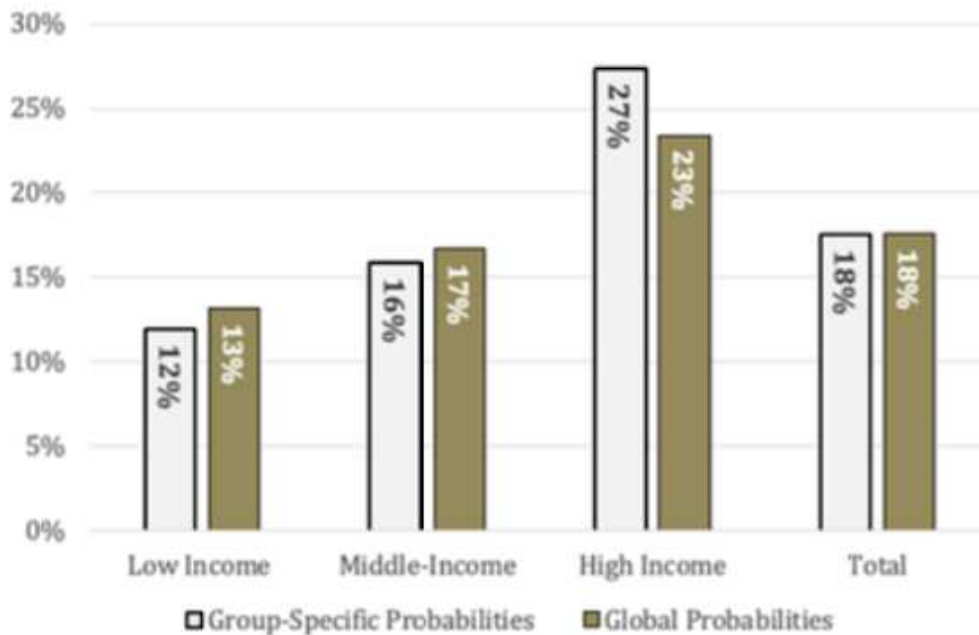
Table 2 - Worldwide potential of teleworking

2.3.2 America, Italy, France, Germany, Sweden, Spain and UK estimates

Other recent studies have also been made. For example, Dingel & Neilman (2020) estimated that 34% of American jobs could be done from home while Boeri, et al. (2020) predicted that 24 points percentage for Italy, 28 for France, 29 for Germany, 31 for Sweden and the UK while 25 for Spain of jobs could be performed from home.

2.3.3 Telework in the EU: pre-pandemic and post pandemic situations

Telework is not a newly coined term and concept. Since 1980 the idea of shifting workers from their offices to a different workspace has been analyzed. In fact, the term "telework" was coined in 1976 by Jack Nillers, who proposed telework and telecommuting as a solution to the congestion issue that American cities had to face at the time (Sostero, et al., 2020). The benefits of teleworking were thus, if not clear, at least already conceptualized 40 years ago but the revolution took in fact time to spread and never reached the experienced levels; in 2018 "fewer than one in twenty employees reported working in this way regularly [...] and less than one in ten occasionally" (Eurofound, 2020). All this changed in 2020 due to

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restrictions taken to respond to the pandemic where, in the first semester of 2020, at least one third of workers worked from home regularly.

If we take a look at the data of the last decade we can see a constant growth in the adoption of telework both among employees and self-employed workers (Figures 19 and 20).
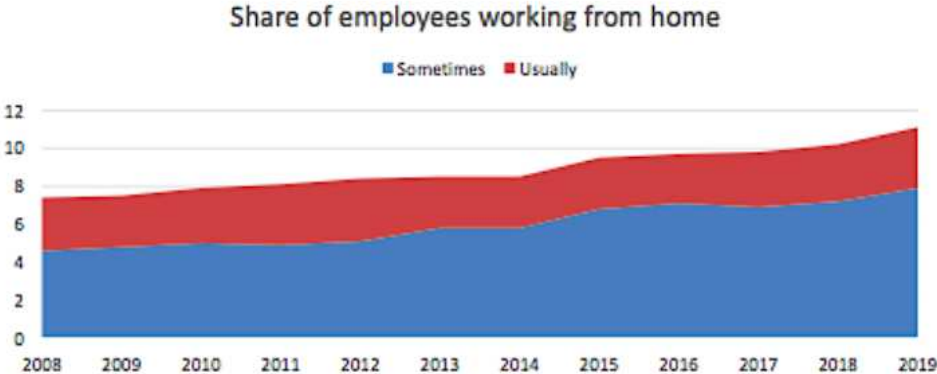
Figure 19 - Share of employees working from home
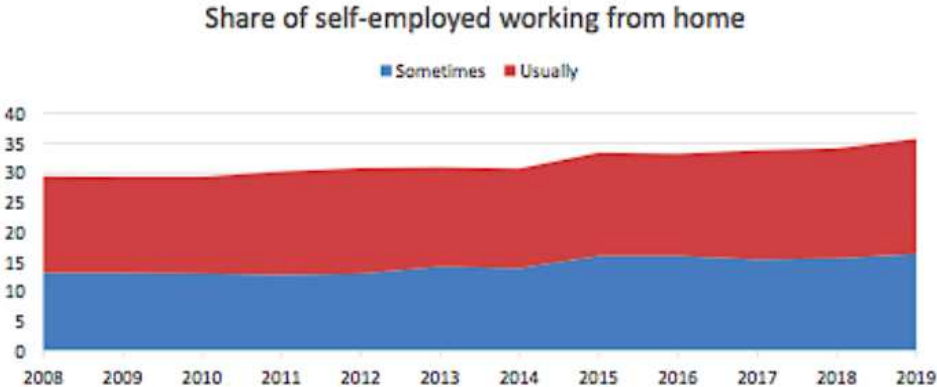
Figure 20 - Share of self-employed working from home

It is not surprising to see that the share of self-employed workers who work from home is consistently higher than employees, however the group considered self-employed includes not only people working at home using ICT but also workers who have their production at home such as small artisans.

As we can see from the graph 35% of self-employed workers were working from home in 2019 (6 points percentage more than in 2008), where more than 19,4% was doing it usually and 16,3% was doing it sometimes. Looking at employees' data it is possible to see that 11%

of them reported to work from home in 2019 (less than 8% in 2008), just 3,2% of which was doing it on a regular basis.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the share of employees working from home drastically changed. As reported in the Eurofound's Covid-19 survey carried out in April 2020, 39% was the percentage of employees that started WFH (Eurofound, 2020). Many real-time surveys were carried out during the beginning of the pandemic in the EU, all of them confirming similar data (Belot, et al., 2020) (Boneva, et al., 2020) (Eurofound, 2020) (Sostero, et al., 2020) (International Labour Organization, 2020) (Milasi, et al., 2020). The number of workers that began WFH practices grew drastically, ranged from one in five workers up to three in five in some regions and countries. The majority of these new remote workers started working from home on a regular basis (or exclusively); while pre-Covid 19 teleworkers (both employees and self-employed) reported working from home occasionally. Differences in the adoption of remote working measures occurred between countries; Eastern and Southern member states of the EU reported lower rates of remote working while Nordic and Benelux countries higher ones (see Figure 21) (Milasi, et al., 2020).
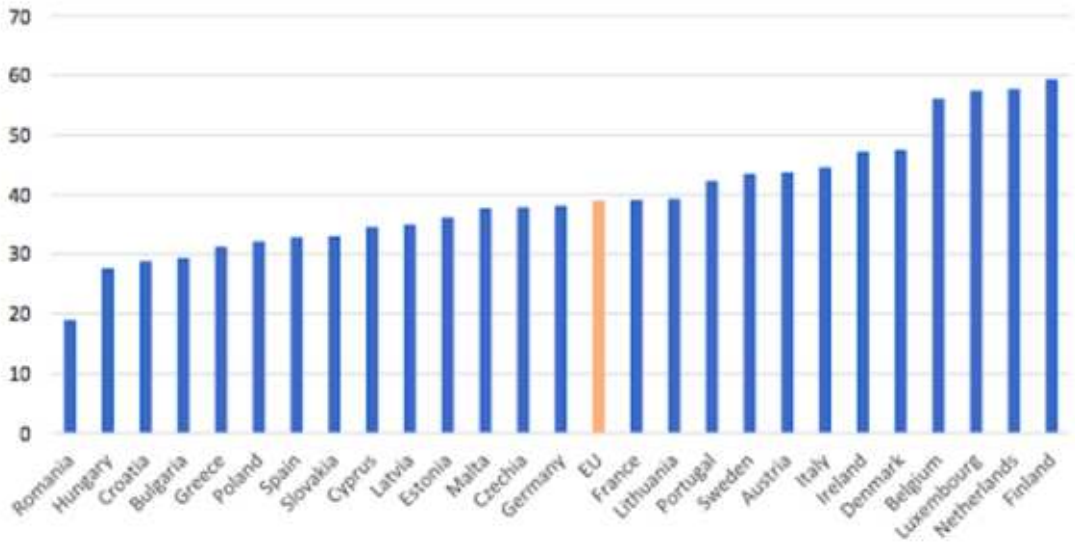
Figure 21 - Differences in the adoption of WFH practices

2.4 From WFH to WFA

WFH practices adopted by companies for their employees give them a working flexibility that traditional working structures fail to provide; moreover, workers can be more productive as they are free to decide how to organize their days and costs of commuting to their office are clearly minimized.

However, a bigger step can be taken. Over the last few years many companies decided to not only let their employees take some day to work remotely but they have given them also the possibility to decide to move in another city or country, i.e. to work from anywhere (WFA) (Choudhury, et al., 2020). Benefits of WFA programs are multiple, both for companies and employees. The latter group can decide for example, to move to another city where the quality of life is higher or where the costs of living are lower. Workers could also want to move to live closer to other family members or simply to enjoy a different panorama and weather.

For companies, adopting WFA programs can result in higher employees' engagement and productivity; they are happier and thus more productive. Cost reduction is also a clear benefit; less workers in offices means that smaller places are required and thus real estate costs are reduced. Finally, companies can hire from everywhere and they consequently have more opportunities to attract talents from all over the world. Having no physical barriers to workers employment is clearly a benefit also for workers who want to be employed in a specific company but may have trouble with working VISAs and permits in general.

WFA could also have a positive effect on society and places where remote workers decide to live and transfer their knowledge. WFA practices can indeed help cities, rural locations, emerging markets who often face brain drain; let's consider students who lived in a geographic location as to attend courses and graduate from the chosen University that have to then move in order to find an adequate job position. This represent a terrible loss for local economies. What if students can instead stay in city where they "culturally grew" as remote workers? They could then become part of the local community, help it improve its social, cultural and economic assets. This might also help contrasting the well-known problem of brain-drain, helping to transform it into brain-circulation.

2.5 Covid-19 and its effects on the city of Venice

Venice started the year 2020 with a fresh open wound: the consequence of the acqua alta (i.e. high tide) of November of the previous year (Comune di Venezia, 2019). It was a disaster for the city that faced huge economic loss, both from direct damage of the high tide and also for the reduction on the tourism sector; tourists afraid of the weather conditions canceled their bookings. Then, starting from February 2020 the new Covid-19 virus started spreading in Italy and then worldwide. Headlines and online news were all about this new virus that, as we have seen, became the center of the debate for the following months. Another thrashing for the city of Venice, that saw its fragile social and economic system seriously threatened. Consequences of the pandemic are particularly heavy for cities that rely mostly on the tourist sector. A touristified destination, being an economic monoculture, is vulnerable to external events being them a pandemic or a war or a famine (Calzada, 2020). Everything that slows down or stops the inflow of tourists in the city of Venice is a threat and can bring to the city's economy to collapse because it is the only element upon which it relies on. A city to survive and be resilient to external threats cannot rely and depend solely on imported inputs and capitals (Cristiano, et al., 2020); this is a necessary condition often forgotten when deciding which policy to implement. Over the last decades many papers, articles and researchers were made about the well-known venetian issue of "overtourism" and "touristification". Gentrification, privatization of public space, conflicts between tourist and locals, environmental damage are just a few of the terrible consequences of the phenomenon (Calzada, 2020)

2.6 Venice in a system thinking conceptualization

An interesting conceptual elaboration of the post-pandemic situation of Venice has been conceptualized by Cristiano et al. (2020). They used epistemological tools rooted in system thinking to study tourist cities, and applied the method to Venice giving a conceptualization of the underling connections between the social, economic and environmental spheres negatively affected by the tourist monoculture (see Figure 22). In particular, their results "*represent a comprehensive description of the dynamics and threats of a tourist city by means of a conceptual elaboration of the related system, encompassing urban (local) life, economy, and resilience in the presence of uncertainties and hazards, such as for example the recent*

Covid-19 pandemic" (Cristiano, et al., 2020). It is not necessary for the purpose of the current thesis to show a detailed explanation of the methods used to build the before-mentioned systematic conceptualization, however useful insights will be pointed out in order to give a general idea the dynamics involved in the city of Venice.

A = asset allocation; E = population expulsion; C = daily labour import; I = influence on habits; T = tourist attraction; M = economic monoculture sensor; F = fleeing money sensor; #t = number of attracted tourists
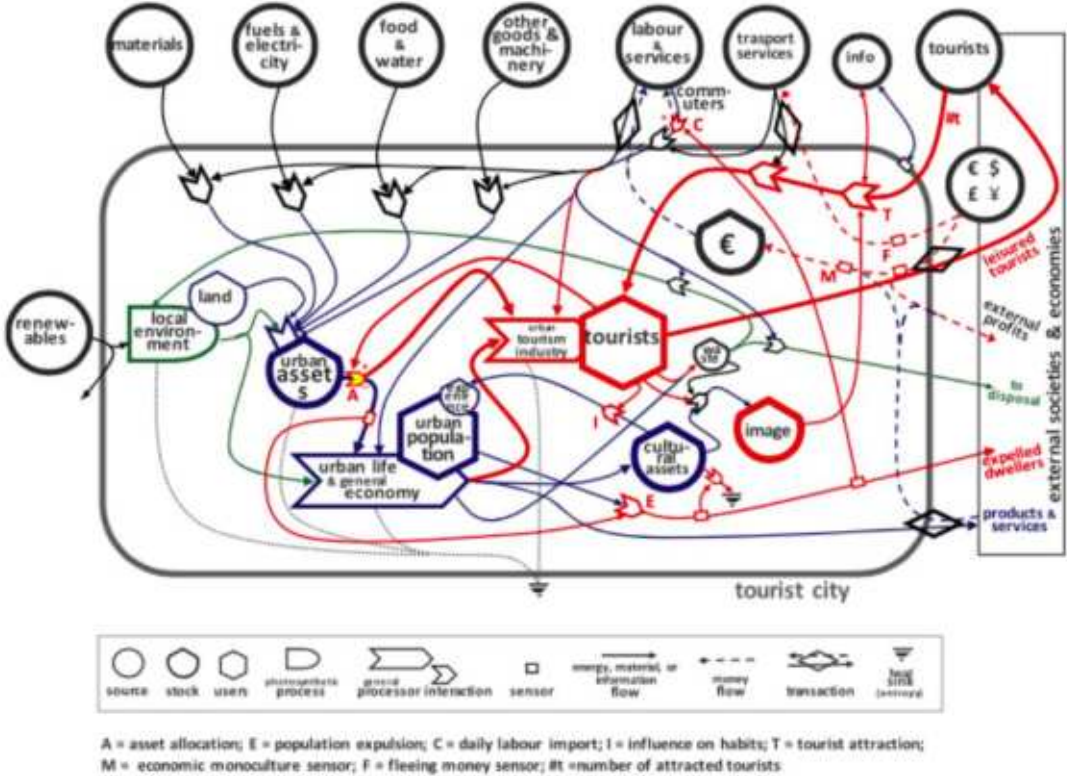
Figure 22 - Venice in a system thinking perspective

A city to function requires renewables sources and imported factors such as materials, fuels and electricity, labor and services and so on. It is based on the local, natural environment which provides the minimum preconditions of life such as air, land etc. while the "urban assets" are the typical stocks a city has such as infrastructures, houses, offices, markets, hospitals, parks and public space. Adding the renewables, local sources and imported factors above-mentioned, the "urban life and general economy" process can happen. These processes comprehend human activities (for example socializing, studying, eating), urban services such as education, transportation, welfare and they also include activities related to industries and commerce.

A city also produces culture and well-being which in turn help shaping the city's image or, as it is called by marketers, the city's brand. What this image does is increasing the numbers

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of visitors and tourists as they are attracted by this over-the-years built asset. Now, the shift from a situation of "people being attracted to a particular city" to "overtourism" occurs in the issue of the allocation of the urban assets. The first leverage point is thus represented by the splitting of urban assets which are more and more devoted to the "urban tourism industry" than to the urban life and general economy process i.e. resources go from citizens to tourists. A reinforcing loop is created; more resources dedicated to tourists, increased tourist industry, more tourists, less resources dedicated to residents and locals.

When this process starts and a city becomes to be identified as a tourist city, several changes in the urban structure occur; residents start to work in the tourism industry influencing in the medium-long term the culture, well-being and overall experience of the urban population. Urban citizens are pushed out of the city and this reinforces again the choice between dedicating urban assets to tourists instead of residents al locals. However, this process has a negative effect on the image that initially attracted tourists; the "authenticity" of the city is lost if its citizens are pushed out of the city. This could be a balancing feedback of the phenomenon but first of all, not all tourists are attracted by the "authenticity" of the human fabric (this is particularly the case of Venice as it has a strong visual impact and image based almost only on that). Secondly, it is not strong enough to compete with the reinforcing loop described before.

Considering the monetary flows, which tend to be mistakenly used by administrations and policy-makers as the main objects of their decisions, only a small part of them actually stays in the urban system while the majority end in external profits. In fact, hospitality facilities or services for the tourism sector are usually owned by foreign companies or capitals and thus, profits will at the end benefit other stakeholders and not the local community of Venice.

2.7 Could remote workers save Venice?

Over the past few years, we witnessed an increasing touristification which eventually reached is braking point with first the terrible flooding of November 2019 and then the Covid-19 pandemic. Citizens saw in real life the assumed negative consequences pointed out in the previous year, but will this be enough? Will this extreme event change the way people make decisions in the city? To make a shift to a different ecosystem it is fundamental that decisions start to be based not only on profit objectives, which are typically short-term in their

configuration, but on more comprehensive and sustainable ones including every possible node of the complex system Venice. The change must lead to a repopulation of the city which in turn will have positive consequences on the cultural assets and well-being. Resources should be adequately divided between the urban industry and the tourism industry in a way that allows Venice to gain a different personal brand, shifting from a Disneyland-kind-of image to a more authentic one. But how to? The answers stand in the repopulation of the city and how to move resources to the local community, ultimately letting it to create a new culture, less tourism-based. Venice desperately needs to attract people in the city that decide to become permanent residents. The main problem, and the reason why we have witnessed such a depopulation of the city, is that of the limitations in terms of occupation that the city offers. There are many few sectors that give the necessary amount of job demand; students are very aware of this problem. The final question is then, could remote workers save Venice?

2.8 The Tulsa Remote business case

Even though with completely different characteristics of the city, the same question was posed by the George Kaiser Family Foundation (GKFF) founded by George Kaiser, a Tulsa native. GKFF funded a series of programs aimed at attracting talent to Tulsa (Choudhury & Salomon, 2020) but they found a problem; there weren't enough job opportunities in Tulsa for talents. They thus decided to focus on some particulars talents who already had a job, overcoming the problem; remote workers.

The issue was then to identify the motives by which remote workers would decide to move to Tulsa; the program offered a 10.000 dollars grant to come and stay in Tulsa for at least one year but it wasn't enough. Remote workers were in fact mainly interested in the community, particularly in how to be part of it and how they were going to find an accommodation. The GFKK responded by designing a program, Tulsa Remote, specifically for these needs and by searching for the elements that could really elevate Tulsa and convince remote workers to come and stay. These elements such as the quality of life, the costs of living, the community connections, the ability to make a difference were then clearly promoted to create a narrative for the city able to give an image of community. It created a sense of place and attachment

that remote workers wanted and this is what made them stay; this at the end was one of the key elements that made Tulsa Remote a successful idea.

On November 12, 2018, Tulsa Remote was launched. With just a little press release the program received over 2500 applications within days and more until the application form was closed down in mid-December reaching over 10000 requests (Choudhury & Salomon, 2020). The program was initially thought with 25 slots available but, giving the high participation rate, it was expanded to around 100 participants. The selection was designed to be as much inclusive as possible and consisted of three stages. First, a three-person team read the applications and ranked them on a scale from one to five. Those rated four or five continued to the second round and were around 1000 applicants total. The second phase consisted in a community meeting where members of local community were invited to award a red, green or gold star for each application. Based on these rankings, the interviews began. The three-person team interviewed 600 applicants and they were sorted into three groups: yes, no and up for discussion. Finally, one hundred applicants were invited to participate and seventy people ultimately accepted.

Figure 23 - Tulsa Remote's first drop of participants

Tulsa Remote partnered with local realtors to find them housing but they didn't function as service providers but as facilitators in order to let the participants build relationships with service providers so that in case of problems they are able to talk directly.

In addition to the 10.000 dollars, Tulsa Remote offered very different sources, programs and events at an annual cost of 1.000 dollars per participant. The program also connected participants with the local community and this effort paid; remote workers understood the value of the program support and in particular the effort to plug them into the community.

The program launched its second round on October 29, 2019 and over 8500 applicants applied for a planned 250-person cohort (Choudhury & Salomon, 2020). The selection process took some changes as it was standardized where possible and participants who took a four or five star ranking in the first phase were, immediately after, interviewed. Tulsa Remote scaled up reducing the cost per participant to 3.000 dollars annually and planned to develop a dedicated space for their remote workers with soundproofed booths for video calls and fewer spaces for team collaboration. The pandemic emerged during the planning phase of this new co-working space, allowing the program to rethink the project and include social-distancing best practices.

SECOND PART

2.9 Qualitative research – interviews to remote workers

In order to understand if a similar solution can be replicated and applied to Venice, first of all it is important to understand which can be the triggers for remote workers to work and live in the city and in what consists the "experience" of Venice for them.

Clearly there are a lot more aspects that need to be analyzed before even considering the application of a Venice remote program. For example, it is not the case for this city to have a competitive advantage regarding the cost of living. Moreover, we are not facing a problem of convincing people to come (quite the opposite we must say), but that of attracting people to become residents and not tourists. Tulsa is a small-medium town not defined as a tourism location and surely not with an over-tourism issue to handle. Nevertheless, Tulsa and Venice

could share the same goals; the repopulation of the city, the acquisition of talents, the transformation of the city brand while injecting economic value.

2.9.1 The process

The aim of the research phase was to understand what remote workers that had an experience in the city felt during their stay. The choice between a quantitative research based on a survey or a qualitative research with interviews was taken quite easily, considering that giving respondents the possibility to freely talk was essential to grasp useful insights. Preset survey with limited answers choice was not, for this case, the right road to take, however the interviews had a basic scheme that guided the interviewer and the interviewee during the meeting. Nine questions were composing the scheme from which to start, and it included topics rounded around remote workers' personal experiences (see Table 3).

The selection of the interviewees had only one requirement; they must have stayed in Venice for a period of time longer than 3 months in total, meaning that they can be considered as part of the community since they can qualify not just as tourists but as temporary or permanent citizens of the city. Some of them decided to permanently move in Venice while some others moved to other cities or came back in their home town.

The interviews were subsequently transcribed (see Appendix C) and analyzed in a qualitative way, coding in an inductive way the topics emerging in each interview and selecting quotations from interviews that might provide a clear illustration of the topic at hand.

2.9.2 The interviewees' profiles

Luc Steels is a Belgian scientist and artist who recently moved to Venice. His first background was in humanities but then he tumbled into computation linguistics. He then started studying computer science and Artificial Intelligence (AI). He has also been interested in art, varying from music, visual arts to even writing an opera in which he also performed. He lived in many different cities during his life; in the USA for 5 years, in Paris for 15 years, in Tokyo working intensively with Sony and in Barcelona.

Kent Cartwright is an English professor in the United States who recently retired. He is now a visiting scholar at Ca Foscari University in the department of linguistic and comparative cultural studies. His professional work has been on Reinassance literature, focusing primarily on Shakespeare. He is currently completing a book on Shakespeare's comedies and have written much of it at Ca Foscari.

Thorbjorn Knudsen is a professor of strategy and organization design. His home base is in Denmark in a town called Odense. He usually spends two or three months at in Barcelona and other cities to work as a researcher. He is currently living in Denmark.

Artem de Siberie is a journalist and writer from Russia that currently lives in Brussels. He lived in Europe for the last 10 years and comes to Venice every year for at least one month to write.

Neil Maiden is an academic who is still employed full time in London but has been living in Venice for 4 years.

Philip Tabor and Gillian Crampton Smith are a married couple of academics. They both taught at IUAV University in Venice and move permanently to Venice in 2005.

Monica Beltrametti was a director of an artificial intelligence laboratory in France owned by Xerox. She now enjoys her retirement between Venice and Geneva.

Natasha Yamamura runs a marine transportation company remotely from Venice where she moved 8 years ago, together with her husband, after he accepted a research fellowship in the city.

Prosper Wanner lived in Venice for thirteen years and has now moved to France. He is currently working on an anthropologic thesis while also being managing partner at a cooperative called "Hotel du Nord". He also works with the European Commission called "Commissione Faro" and as a project consultant; role covered during his stay in Venice for the Venice Arsenal.

2.10 Interviews

Interviewees were asked different questions about their personal experience with the city, starting from their expectations before coming in the first place ending to their thoughts after having lived in the city as shown in Table 3. Venice is often pictured as this dreamy place, as if being in a fairly tail. But what is the reality? Unfortunately, we cannot have one, unique, accepted opinion; it is intrinsic in the meaning of experience its subjectivity, but we can at least compare them and search for common patterns among clusters of people, in this particular case, remote workers.

1. **First of all, I would like to know which were the reasons why you came in Venice in the first place. Tell me more about that first time and when you came back again in the city.**

2. **Did you decide to come back for a longer period of time after you first stay in Venice? And if yes, why? Which were the reasons that make you decide to stay in Venice for a longer span of time, not as a tourist but as a quasi-resident?**

3. **Which were your expectations of the city before coming in Venice? Did your opinions about the city changed after your first experience and in which way?**

4. **How did/do you spend your time in Venice? How was/is your routine? Is it different in your opinion compared to other cities where you lived? Do you believe that Venice has an influence on it?**

5. **If you have to choose one thing that captured your attention about your experience in Venice what would it be? and why?**

6. **Do you think Venice had in some way an influence on your work and if yes how?**

7. **What difficulties did you find during your stay/s in Venice? and which, on the other hand, are the positive aspects of your stay/s in the city?**

8. **Have you meet interesting people in Venice and if yes, what did you learn from them?**

9. **Finally let's talk about the five sense (vision, hearing, smell, taste, touch) and Venice. For each one of them could you please tell me a**

memory, something that comes to your mind associated with your experience in Venice.

Table 3 - Draft of the questions asked to the interviewees

2.11 Findings

Four main topics will be discussed as being the most mentioned among interviewees; the working and more practical sphere (both positive and negative aspects), the strong sense of community and the sensory dimension (see Table 4). The complete transcripts of all the interviews can be found in Appendix C at the end of this thesis.

```
      POSITIVE ASPECTS             ¦        NEGATIVE ASPECTS
                                   ¦
  1.   Life easiness and efficiency ¦  1.         Over-tourism
  2.      The lagoon environment    ¦  2.         Bureaucracy
  3.           The community        ¦  3.      The housing problem
  4.    The enhanced sensory exp.   ¦
```

Table 4 - Insights from the interviews categorized by different topics

Negative aspects among interviewees' personal experiences regard mainly issues related to:

- the over-tourism problem,
- the complex bureaucracy
- and the difficulties in finding a place to stay in Venice.

Positive aspects on the other hand include:

- Life easiness and its effects on efficiency
- The environment
- Community life

- Sensory experience

Overtourism. Everyone imagines Venice as an incredibly beautiful city but also terribly crowded and even difficult to live in. Tourism, as we said before, is clearly one of the main issues, a shared thought among all the interviewees, as also pointed out by Artem de Sibérie, journalist and writer: "the only negative thing from my point of view, for what I know, it's tourism. I can see how it destroys Venice and how it makes it very hard or impossible for the locals, and even for people like me to enjoy the city. Sometimes I think not to return just to not be one of these people that contributes to the destruction of the city [...] what is at stake is the cultural life in its everyday form".
Neil Maiden, professor of Digital Creativity currently employed in London affirms:

"About negative sides, well the Venetians sometimes seems to not understand their own city [...] I see that they are traders but they risk to damage their own city [...] I think this is a big issue. Related to that is the economy, you see a lot of things closed, markets, shops, and who knows what is going to replace them, so I think economics has to change. The pandemic is an opportunity but there's no leadership here. It is something that annoys me sometimes. I don't think Venetians realize how lucky they are."

Few other negative aspects emerged from the interviews; the second and third most commonly mentioned ones are respectively bureaucracy and renting a place where to stay.

Bureaucracy. Luc Steels scientist and artist, telling me about his personal experience said that *"it's not easy to deal with the bureaucracy. The city hall [..] should make it easier to get inserted into the fabric of the city. Now I am a resident but it was a long process and [...] I was very disappointed actually. After a lot of very complex things I found finally an office in Ca Foscari that helps you, they were key and without them I would have never done it".* Venice thus misses a welcoming infrastructure that is clearly a very important element if your objective is that one of attracting people to become residents.
Accommodation. The former opinion is shared also by Philip Tabor and Gillian Crampton Smith. They explained that the difficult part of coming to Venice was having to do with bureaucracy. But they also stress that it was very difficult to find an apartment. Not a

surprising outcome at all. If we give a look at the official data reported by Città di Venezia (2018) we will discover that tourists registered in accommodation facilities increased from 4.2 million in 2013 to 5.0 in 2017. At the same time, both hotel beds and complementary accommodation facilities increased by 7% and 114% respectively. Altogether they were offering 43000 beds at the end of 2017. On the other hand, 52143 are the inhabitants of the city at the end of 2019 (Città di Venezia, 2020). This means that in a progression diversion of housing assets, nearly half of the beds in the city are dedicated to tourists (Cristiano, et al., 2020).

However, it is not as bad as it is perceived. In general, living in Venice is, at least for our interviewees, *"quite simple"* says Kent Cartwright, English professor and writer; *"you don't expect it to be, you expect it to be quite a difficult city. Sometimes getting through the tourism mob can be difficult but otherwise is an easy place to live"* he added.

An easy city to live, and its effects on efficiency. The main motives by which Venice can be considered an easy city to live in are mostly connected to the fact that it is built on a human scale. There are no cars and this leaves you two possibilities; to walk or take a boat. The public transport is also quite efficient. The *battelli* connect every point of the historical center and if you wanted, you could cross the entire city in 50 minutes by walk. It is clear that the commuting time is on average drastically reduced, which in turn increases your efficiency as you don't have to worry about losing most of your day on public transports. It is especially true when you make a comparison with other big cities such for example London where Neil Maiden, one of the interviewees, lived before moving to Venice.

 "Everything is local here. In London [..] I had to leave the house at 7 to be at the office at 8 and take the underground for one hour" he said, *"the localness means it makes your life easier and more efficient. My life and my work are more efficient now"*.

Monica Beltrametti also stated: *"The thing is that if you live in a very busy town it takes you an hour to commute to work [...]. All this is much easier in Venice, [...] you have more time to concentrate on work because you are not preoccupied by all these other things* (referring

to her previous example of having to take your children to school and other places). *[…] You don't have to take the car. It is much more a pleasant way of living than in busy cities"*.

The environment. Life quality and the increased productivity are also enhanced by the particular environment in which Venice stands: the lagoon. The absence of cars makes the city safe and quiet, according to our interviewees. What you hear waking up in the morning is mainly the noise of people talking. Venice is still a city but with a strong connection with its natural system. Quoting again Neil Maiden: *"it is its lagoon and its environment, we have a boat now so we just sail around, you have to have a boat here, and it would be impossible to escape the city like that in most places"*.

The lagoon environment actually offers a remedy to some negative aspects of life in Venice: *"I'm a water person and when with the Rowing Club in summer we go out into the lagoon and there's nobody there and it's incredibly beautiful. I think that's another factor. In the days when Venice was absolutely full of tourists it was a way to escape the city, It changed a lot I would say in the past five years.*" (Gillian Smith)

A small but international city. Another important aspect that emerged in the interviews was the opposition between Venice being a small town defined by its closeness and Venice being an internationally recognized big city. The concept is well explained by Philip that affirms:

"Venice is very strange because sometimes it feels like a small, tiny, isolated village but then these great circuses come to town, the Biennale and the Film Festival, and everything suddenly changes into this kind of Hollywood or Barcelona".

Thorbjorn Knudsen, Danish professor, said that Venice has *a "rithym of the old days"* that makes it a little village but at the same time it is very abstract and *"it's like Tivoli"*.

Community life. The contraposition between small village and big city is present in almost every interview and it is strictly connected to the sense of community that the interviewees feel while in Venice. The closeness and the human scale of Venice makes it possible to be

immersed in the community, but its international side opens numerous opportunities to participate in cultural projects, events and activities.

For example, one of the reasons for which Artem de Sibèrie loves so much Venice is this very social factor; *"I don't know many people [..] but I never feel like I'm alone"* he explained.

Moreover, Neil Maiden also affirmed *"it is actually quieter than I thought […], and there is also more social and community life than I thought. You hear often that Venice is dying, that people are leaving and so on, but it is not actually true. There are a lot of social groups that exist, so in this sense it is more social than London, it is quite easy to make friends"*.

Interviewees felt easier to connect with locals and agree with the fact that the local community is willing to help you and more importantly gives you an easy access to a lot of different and unique experiences. The fact that Venice is still a small city and everything is local help the creation of the local community and "forces" to be part of it.

For Kent Cartwright Venice is "*a pedestrian city. No cars. You meet people in the streets. Even if you are there for one week you will meet someone [..]. That's the thing I like the most about Venice"*.

Philip Tabor also adds about the argument that "*the other thing about Venice, because it is a small town [...] is that you are always meeting people, sometimes friends but sometimes just acquaintances in the street. It is a very great pleasure and I think it allows your social circle to increase [...]. It's kind of relaxing and comforting*". Venice is a city where "*you rely on your social connections to an immense degree*" affirmed Thorbjorn Knudsen.

The integration in local community is thus fundamental in Venice, confirming the shared feeling of it being a small town. The positive aspect is that it is not as difficult as could seem to be, as confirmed by all of the interviewees to have access to the local community.

Natasha Yamamura, remote worker for 8 years now, found that "*the community here is a lot tighter and it's very accessible and at the same time they just have so many things to offer, to experience different stuff*".

This characteristic makes Venice a perfectly suitable city for a project dedicated to remote workers who are willing to live in the historical center. It needs of course the construction of a welcome infrastructure to help them deal with bureaucracy issues but being a "social city" the integration could require less more effort than one can imagine.

The sensory dimension. Finally, another important dimension noteworthy of attention is the sensory experience related to Venice. Each one of the five senses have a particular image or memory that represents the personal experience someone has with the city which is particularly true in Venice because of its uniqueness.

Gillian affirmed "*the thing that struck me very hard was the kind of sensuous qualities of the city. You could feel the heat off the building, the cold, you could smell shops, the from the bread being baked to the wood being worked in the workshops and everything which was for me just absolutely astonishing coming from London*".

On of the reasons why another interviewee, Artem, decided to come to Venice were in fact strongly connected with the sensorial dimension that comes with the city. "*It is very quiet*" explained Artem "*It is just beautiful. It may be banal but there are no other places which such concentration of beauties. Every time I came to Venice I feel like my soul is going through some therapy*" he finally added.

Kent experienced the same sensation while living in Venice and talked about the city as a place with a "*kind of haunted power [...] It seems like it rising from the water and everything is vivid, and colorful and light plays on the water and the sense of shadow [...] you hear different sounds, mostly human voices*". He finally stated "*the sensory experience of Venice is just different and every place you look is stimulating. The sensory power of Venice is really important*".

The enhanced sensory dimension of the city was further analyzed by asking the interviewee to state the first thing that came to mind while thinking about the five senses related to Venice. As one could imagine for the vision the most common answer was related to the beauty, element that undoubtedly represents the city. For hearing, human voices is what seems to have been mostly impressed in their minds while for taste Italian Food was the undefeated winner. The smell sense brought back memories about the water surrounding the city while the touch was probably the question that to more time to answer but the majority associate it with the feeling of touching the stone of the numerous venetian bridges.

CHAPTER III – VENICE IN CONTRAST

"A photograph is the product of an encounter and the start of a conversation."

Daniel Palmer

3.1 Introduction

It is hard to find another place in the world that has been recorded in such a detailed and passionate way by foreigners as Venice; John Ruskin's *The Stones of Venice* (1851-1853), Heny James's Aspern Papers (1888), Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* (1912)*,* Marcel Proust's Albertine Disparue (Proust, 1927), Hemingway's *Across the Rivers and into the Trees* (1950)*,* to name a few. Throughout the years, writers, filmmakers and artists contributed with their novels and stories to build Venice's myth in the collective imaginary. The city of canals has been portraited as a magical and romantic fairytale, or as a finely decorated crib destined to certain doom.

The last chapter of the thesis is dedicated to the research of a frame useful to define what Venice is, focusing ultimately on my personal experience of it; starting from an overview of the different associations the city gained over the years, it will then include Lévi Strauss's structuralism theory (Lévi-Strauss, 1955) as a conceptual basis for a personal interpretation of how to give meaning to the *experience of* and *in Venice.*

My thoughts about this city changed drastically since I first came here. I was one of the many students that loved the idea of spending some time in such a particular environment but honestly believed that life after graduation didn't include the Venetian lagoon. I understood after a while that Venice is an incredible multifaced city and there is a lot more than just a pictorial façade. The last part of the chapter answers to a question I am often asked: "how is it to live in Venice?".

3.2 The myth of Venice through literature

From Casanova to Pirandello, continuing through D'Annunzio, John Ruskin and Lord Byron, from Marcel Proust to Thomas Mann and Ernest Hemingway, Venice has always had an incredible influence on those who had the opportunity to visit it. Each of them narrated the experience in/of Venice influenced by his own sensibility, historical period and culture. "*There is nothing left to discover and or describe*" wrote Henry James when talking about Venice in *Italian Hours* (1909); the city has indeed an infinite number of publications, films, books contextualizing their story in it. With the modern era photographs are also added to the list of means by which the city has been carefully and meticulously painted.

Over the centuries its image however changed, starting from the one of a *powerhouse*, taken as an extraordinary example for its commercial richness, fair justice and stable government, to the image of a *playground* during Casanova's years when mystery and sexuality defined its reputation, ending with its later image of a dying old woman that once was the undiscussed queen.

The image of Venice as a city of economic and political power was built by the Venetian aristocracy and the *Maggior Consiglio* in order to build its myth. Indeed, the self-proclaimed Serenissima was known around the world as the Rich, the Wise and the Just (McPherson, 1990).

The city hosted various artists and painters who advertised Venice with their splendid drawings of its *calli*, *canali* and magnificent *palazzi* facing the *Canal Grande*, as an enchanted land made of water and dreams.

The city became thus a preferred destination for aristocrats, artists and those who wanted to indulge in liberties of all kinds. The Carnival, which during the 18th century lasted almost half of the year, and the government-regulated business of legal courtesans rapidly transformed the city in the representation of desire and sexuality. It is here that many started to identify Venice as a dying city in its morality. Venice's atmosphere and lifestyle at the time was described as "*a caricature of life lived in sensual gratification, canceling all responsibility, all intellectuality, all seriousness of men*" (Plant, 2002).

Then, after the city passed in French and then Austrian hands, its myth changed again adding the concept of death and decay, with the personification of the city as an old once-glorious melancholic queen thus introducing the contraposition between glory and death which will later end as a pillar in the common imaginary. Venice is seen as a city in balance between apocalypse and utopia, with a nostalgic romanticism of its lost greatness that, although not existing anymore is still worthy of admiration. With the beginning of the 20th century and the advent of industrialization, metropolitan cities became more crowded than ever; in this scenario, Venice was representing an escape from modernity and the crowds forming in other big cities. Venice is, in fact, an exception to the common definition and imaginary of big metropolitan city; its boundaries are blurred and its conformation tells us everything but linearity. Its canals define the shape of the city and life in it is influenced by it. Thus, Venice gives to the visitor the opportunity to immerse himself in a not-definable place, a white canvas where each one of us has the opportunity to paint his own experience which will be the reflection of our inner self, of who we are.

I believe the city has this incredible talent of being extremely adaptable; it reflects how you are feeling or what are you thinking. It accompanies you while you are walking around the city without being predominant. Venice is a place that exists between the natural and man-made, between the historical and mythological, becoming an unclassifiable place that attracts those who want to live in between.

3.3 Lévi-Strauss' structuralism and analysis of myth

Lévi-Strauss's work on meaning and myth is useful here to explain how I personally represent Venice and the experience *in* and *of* it. Lévi-Strauss was an anthropologist identified as the developer of the Structuralism school of thought (Lévi-Strauss & Eribon, 1988). According to its studies, cultural systems presents universal patterns which origin has to be found in the invariant structure of the human mind. In other words, the human mind has a stationary structure that represents the basis for human thoughts and thus, different cultures are in principle built upon identical logical and structural thoughts. His work, indeed, emphasizes the underlying structures of human mind which give meanings to things. According to Lévi-Strauss's theory, the previously mentioned structures, form the bottom of

human thoughts and emerge from "the human mental process of pairing opposites" (Britannica, 2014). In other, more simplistic words human thought is based on the contraposition between two elements, for example life and death or cold and hot and so on, which ultimately create this unchangeable basic structure that is the starting point of giving meaning to the world. It must be stressed out that for Lévi-Strauss a single element of the structure does not have any meaning per se but gains it thanks to all the other elements surrounding it; thus, the relationships between the elements are more important than the elements themselves. The human mind is seen as an archive of natural elements *"from which it selects pairs of elements that can be combined to form diverse structures"* (Britannica, 2014).

Lévi-Strauss' studies on myths started around a basic contradiction. Myths, according to the anthropologist, are on one hand characterized by a complete arbitrariness in their manifestation; everything seems possible in myths and on the other hand, a strong similarity can be found between different myths that came from different cultures or parts of the world. In his words, thus, "*if the content of a myth is contingent, how are we going to explain that throughout the world myths do resemble one another so much?*" (Lévi-Strauss, 1955).

To solve this apparent contradiction, Lévi-Strauss compares the study of myth to the one of language. To find meaning in language, a contradistinction between *langue* and *parole* is needed: the former being the structural side of language while the latter representing a single unit with a non-reversible meaning. Langue refers to a flexible period of time and it is the combination of sounds, i.e. it represents the structural side*,* while *parole* pertains to a definite period of time which is statical and non-revertible (Lévi-Strauss, 1955).

Keeping this in mind, myths are in fact, in Lévi-Strauss' opinion, an evolution of language as they include a third level of analysis. Myths are in fact at the same time *langue* and *parole:* *"It is that double structure, altogether historical and an-historical, which explains that myth, while pertaining to the realm of the parole and calling for an explanation as such, as well as to that of the langue in which it is expressed, can also be an absolute object on a third level which, though it remains linguistic by nature, is nevertheless distinct from the other two"* (Lévi-Strauss, 1955). Considering the time reference, myths can explain the present, the past

and the future; their stories refer to a determinate time but their meaning and significance survives independently from temporal contextualization.

It is from this reasoning that Lévi-Strauss' structuralism theories were built. In his opinion, myths are at the same time language, as they in fact need to be written or told to absolve their function, and something different from it. Exactly like language, also myths are made of single units (i.e. words) but they belong to a more complex level than those of language. Struss arrived to the conclusion that these elements present in myths are not, as in language, isolated parts of expressions but they are in fact a group of related units; it is only by their combination that meaning can be found in myths. The elements composing the structural configuration of myths are called by Strauss *gross constituent units.*

Going further in his analysis, Lévi-Strauss states that the basic structure of myths is always composed of elements which are **opposites**; for example, opposites such as good vs bad, life vs death, female vs male etc. are often used in myths. According to Strauss, myths are key to the understanding of the human mind as he states that the human logic is always based on this unconscious binomial structure i.e. humans give meaning to events, facts, things around them by paring opposites concepts and building a story following this particular structural logic.

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned method, structuralism, I found that while describing and reflecting on my personal *experience in* and *of* Venice, contrast and contradictions were often present. Thus, as Lévi-Strauss gave meaning to myths by the structural model based on the human thinking process of opposites pairing, I will try to give a meaning to the definition of *experience of Venice*, by the process of individualization and selection of pairs of opposites which are peculiar characteristics of this particular city. Answering to the question "what is the meaning of the experience of Venice" is a difficult task to be achieved because of the city's complexity and multiple possible different and subjective point of views that the city can offer; however, what in my opinion could be done to simplify this task is to narrow down the spectrum of the possible definitions by creating a scheme which can serve as a guiding map.

Here I present a representation of what Venice is and how it can be perceived based on a structure composed of opposite binomials. To make meaning from this representation we must consider the relationships between elements more important than the elements themselves and finding indeed what the *experience of and in Venice* is as the whole system. The same basic concept thus, as the Lévi-Strauss theory of structuralism in which the mental structure was the product of a process of pairing opposites.

The selected paired opposites that will be later shown and narrate are photographically represented by images I personally took during my stay in Venice and are used as a means of visually understanding the elements that in my opinion are fundamental parts of the Venice experience structure.

3.4 Venice in contrast

In this chapter I address an introspective approach to the experience of Venice driven by research into my own repertoire of photographic images. I have been following a research approach similar to what is called "self-study of practice" (Bullough Jr & Pinnegar, 2001), i.e. a reflective examination of own's practice. While this approach has been mostly used in research on teaching, I found it useful to extend it to the study of photographic practice. I am a (part-time) professional photographer, and during my years in Venice I took many photographs of the city. To conduce this research, I used the set of such photographs in an interactive process of selection and search for conceptual opposites that could characterize my experience of the city. The final outcome of this iterative process was the selection of 10 pictures representing 5 conceptual oppositions.

My experience of and in Venice can be thus visually represented and textually explained following a scheme of contrasting concepts which are all characteristics that represent the city, but at the same time are felt differently depending on everyone's personal journey and relationship with it. Before going further in the description of such conceptual contrasts, I recommend starting from the visual material. I organized each opposite of the scheme in an interactive "online exhibition" in which oppositions will be portrayed through the use of photographs. The exhibition "*Venice in contrast*" (see Figure 24 and 25) consists in the subdivision of a 3D space into five separate rooms which will contain five pairs of opposites; each of one consists in a selected image.

The idea is to translate structural theory into a virtual space in which images function as the gross constituent units. To enter the photographic exposition, please click **here.**

Figure 24 - The exhibition space

THE EXPERIENCE OF VENICE THROUGH ITS OPPOSITES: A PHOTOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

Venice's Opposites is an online, interactive photographic exhibition built to present my personal experience of the city of Venice. It was created based on five different opposite concepts that I found to be the representation of what living in Venice means to me. Each room contains a pair of contrasting constructs which will be later explained in the written part of this chapter inside the thesis. At this stage, I would like to let the users decide which room to enter and build their own opinions about the photographs shown.

Figure 25 - Homepage of the website created for "Venice in contrast"

3.5 The exhibition explained: *Venice in contrast's* pairs of opposites

3.5.1 Death/Decadency vs Life/Innovation

Surely, one of the most recognized concepts related to Venice is *death*, opposed to *life*, used in their broadest definition.

The association of Venice to the opposites of life and death has been central to the emergence of the literacy image of the city across the 19th and 20th centuries. Henry James has provided one of the most insightful penetrations of this dualism. On the one hand he perceives the city as a living (female) body as no other city; "*the place seems to personify itself, to become human and sentient and conscious of your affection*" (James, 1909). On the other hand, "*the essential present character of the most melanchonic of cities resides simply in its being the most beautiful of tombs*" (James, 1909).

The concept of death has been associated with Venice in ways that have evoked, from the decay of the power of the city during the 19th century to the increasing association to death by demographic loss and overtourism in recent years.

In my experience, the concept of death can be detected in many and different aspects of the city, which are for the most part a consequence of the "overtourism" issue. Death can be

found in the number of citizens that decide to move outside the city that grows rapidly every year or in the almost absence of policies and initiatives to avoid this phenomenon of migration as opposed to the increasing number of hotels, tourism-related services and investments end up discouraging the few people left in the city. You can hear, walking around the city, conversations between Venetians and feel this sense of decay and death in their statements. Everywhere you look the consequences are clear; signs on shop windows stating "VENDESI" (i.e. for sale) are multiplying, empty spaces are bought by big international holdings with the purpose of making yet another luxury hotel. The decreasing trend of the number of residents in Venice is made even more clearer by Venessia.com (Venessia, 2020), an active group of citizens that builds debates around Venice's issues, which takes track of the variations in the total number of Venice's residents publishing it in their Facebook group page that counts 41.000 members (Venessia, 2020).

Figure 26 - Updated data published on Venessia.com, 2/04/2021

The group also installed on the 21st of March 2008 (Venessia, 2008), an electronic counter on the shop window of Farmacia Morelli at Campo San Bortolomio which displays the exact number of actual residents in the historical center of the city as a sign of the visible death of the lagoonal city.

In *Venice in contrast* the photograph representing the concept of death was taken during a walk in the Sestiere Castello (see Figure 27). I found it to be the perfect explanation of the

disregard that many people have towards their own city – a notion often emerging also in the interviews of chapter 2. In fact, one of the main reasons of Venice current decay is the loss of civic spirit, the lack of concern and the indifference shown by many in the city, who are, unfortunately, contributing to its slow death. The photo, that shows a part of a ruined wall, represents the wrong decisions people take in and about the city, which will inevitably lead to its degradation (in Appendix D all the photographs of *Venice is contrast* are collected). The sign on the right upper corner of the photograph states "*divieto di abbandono rifiuti*" which means that waste dumping is not allowed in the area. Despite this, objects were abandoned right under the sign. Even if it is known that something is against the law and/or harmful for the city, people still take that wrong decision seeking a minimum effort with the maximum short-term personal gain. The livelihood of a city is a public good that vanishes when citizens free-ride. The same concept is applicable to those who have the duty to protect the city but instead decide otherwise.

Opposed to these destructive behaviors, there is the bright side of the city which works hard to make the change possible. Historically, the *Serenissima* held incredible economic power and political influence. The city's richness was undiscussed and it is possible to this day to understand the level of power held by the city just by looking at its *palazzi* decorating the *Canal Grande,* the splendid churches and its iconic landmarks. Nevertheless, its richness cannot be found only in its urban heritage; in fact, the strongest weapon the city could use against its unfortunate possible future are the people who live in it or those who would love to build a life in its historical center. People are what bring life in the city.
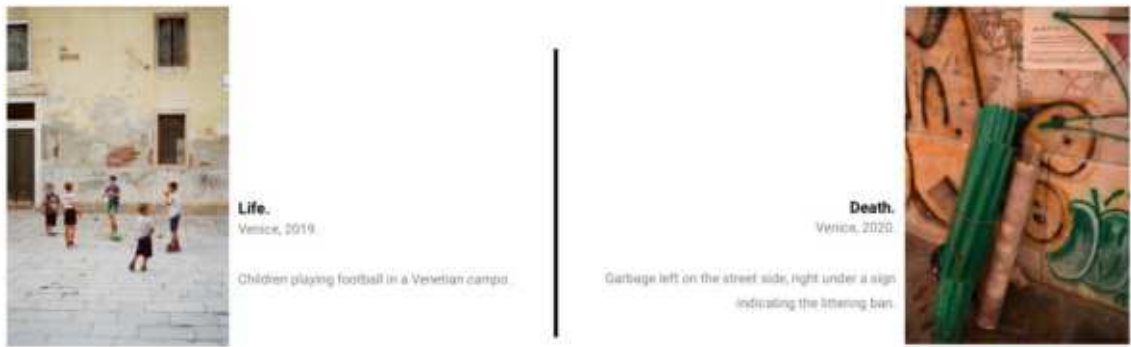

Figure 27 - Life vs Death

It is true that the perception of the city is the one of a fallen Queen with nothing left but her buildings, but in fact her vitality isn't totally lost. I found that Venice has a very deep sense of community, which amazed me and contrasts with the free-riding attitude of the other citizens. Being quite a small city with very few left residents, many of those who remained have an incredible sense of attachment to it and each other. The beauty and power of the city will be preserved until there are residents who will fight for it and keep alive its cultural and social fabric. If Venice wants to avoid becoming an open-air museum or amusement park, the key tool resides in its population together with the attraction of new residents. Community and people are the only element that can save Venice from dying, introducing innovation, new economic possibilities and growing different sectors from the tourism one.

All these concepts are represented by the photograph showing a group of kids playing in *Campo dei Gesuiti* (see Figure 27 or Appendix D at the end of the thesis), one of the *campi* in which it is possible to see kids playing outside. The city has the duty to give them, to everyone who wants to become a resident and to their actual citizens, the possibility to grow personally and professionally.

People who live or lived in Venice could be either its saviors or those who condemn it to death. Unfortunately, the latter option seems sometimes to prevail.

3.5.2 Mystery/Openness

Mystery.
Venice, 2018.

The photograph was taken during an exclusive fashion event inside a private Venetian palazzo.

Openness.
Venice, 2020.

An old man walking outside the Excelsior Hotel headed to the famous Mostra del Cinema.

The city has maintained its "selling proposition" untouched since the 18th century; an image of mystery, beauty and sexual appeal. This mystery implies that the secret nature of the city

is hard to reach, closed to the visitor (see again the works of Henry James, making very explicit the "unreachable" nature of the city). On the other hand, it has an international openness which is strongly sustained by marketing actions, aiming to maintain the tourism sector as much florid as possible.

We can say that Venice often acts like a spoiled girl or, even better, a clever courtesan that initially treats you as being the center of the world but then, when she finally convinced you to spend days with her, doesn't let you to truly discover all her secrets. She keeps you in this undefined zone that stands between openness and mystery.

In fact, mystery started to be associated to the experience of the city, and to be discussed also in the literature, after the end of the Venetian Republic and the beginning of its decadency. As Thomas Mann wrote *"[...] This was Venice, the flattering and suspect beauty — this city, half fairy tale and half tourist trap, in whose insalubrious air the arts once rankly and voluptuously blossomed, where composers have been inspired to lulling tones of somniferous eroticism"* (Mann, 1912). The city became an escape for nobility from all European courts; a place in which everything is allowed and the wealthy came to induce in elsewhere forbidden pleasures. The characteristic of mystery remained even if slightly transformed in its meaning. Only a few people could say that they really know Venice but no one could affirm that knows all it has to offer. Until the present day, the strong feeling of mystery and wonder has been part of the *Venice experience*.

As much as there is mystery there is also openness. Given its peculiarity and fame, it is quite difficult to have never seen a picture portraying its *canali* or a painting pictures its treasures or have read about its stories from some famous writer's book. The city also offers internationally recognized events such as the Biennale di Venezia (2021) or the Mostra del Cinema, and many other exhibitions or cultural attractions that every year bring millions of visitors to walk in the historical city.

3.5.3 Water as a gift vs water as a threat

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Water as a threat.
Venice, 2019.

The day after the Acqua Granda of
November 2019.

Water as a gift.
Venice, 2019.

An antique Venetian sailboat exhibited inside the
Arsenale.

We can't talk about Venice without talking about water. The relationship the city and its citizens have with this element is tremendously strong and path-dependent; the presence of water and its configurations change how the city behaves and adjusts itself. Water is what makes Venice so special, it makes the city appealing for tourists lured by the globally-defined "*floating city*". Since its foundation water gave to Venetians protection and most importantly economic power. Representative in this sense is the splendid Gianbattista Tiepolo's painting "*I doni del mare*" in which Neptune, god of the sea, give to a wealthy woman, personification of Venice, jewelry and golden coins; *schei* in venetian dialect (Figure 28).

Figure 28 - "I doni del mare", Gianbattista Tiepolo

Moreover, it is water that decides mobility in Venice. The city built on water has indeed its *palazzi*'s main entrance facing the canals instead of the *calli*. This particular configuration gives the city a unique dimensionality and influences the experience people have in it from

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the core, changing the perception of time and space. Indeed, in Venice, time flow is somehow defined by the presence of water. It makes you slow down, take time and organize your plans accordingly. For Italo Calvino, Venice is an anti-Euclidean city where the distance between to ends it is not a linear route but the result of a multidimensional walk, shaped by the presence of water which is combined with wavy little streets and connected with seemingly infinite bridges (Calvino, 1974).

Water was since its foundations an element of protection for its residents who shaped the lagoon for at least twelve centuries creating a delicate equilibrium (Scapettone, 2016). However, during the last two centuries, massive infrastructure projects changed this balance, compromising the relationship between environment and human thus transforming water from *water as a gift* to *water as a threat*. What in fact is the main cause of the more recent high tides, according to Scapettone, has to be associated with *"pollution, dumping, farming, and industry at the city's periphery"* (Scapettone, 2016) and not climatic conditions intrinsic to the lagoon. We could here insert another opposing aspect of the city: humans vs environment or man vs nature. However, the topic is, in my opinion, intrinsic to the peculiar venetian natural configuration which has indeed to do with it being surrounded by the sea.

Water has now become a threat for the city and this is, unfortunately, another fundamental element that pushes its residents to move from the island to the mainland, searching for a more comfortable and less threatened living.

3.5.4 Past vs present or historical vs modern

Figure 29 - Past vs Present

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One of the first default thoughts that come to anybody's mind while thinking about Venice has to do with the city being either a romantic getaway or a place filled with history. Poems, books, films, photographs and every representation of the city created during the last centuries, developed the image of Venice as the perfect example of antithesis to modernity. When you dream about Venice you think of it as an escape to the contemporary, frenetic and metropolitan world; you think of it as a place standing between the past and the present. It could not be otherwise; nowhere do art and life seem so interfused, you are constantly surrounded by the products of its glorious past. Everywhere you go and whatever you are doing in your daily activities, its history and the artistic-cultural heritage, shape your behavior and thoughts.

An interesting study about Venice and modernity can be found in Jennifer Scapettone's *"Killing the Moonlight"* (Scapettone, 2016). The writer offers examples in which the city collided against modernity. For Scapettone, Venice is not an antithetical place of modern life in which you can only find an escape but it is in fact a place used as a laboratory for artists and researchers to find contradictions, failures and dangers about *"modernity"*.

The modernity *of* and *in* Venice seems, at first sight, a paradox because the city presents itself as having a path-dependent relationship with its past. However, it is exactly this characteristic, the unique historical stratification of the city, that makes it a unique, inimitable, one-of-a-kind city. The idea of Scappettone stands, as mine, between two opposites in which she finds her conclusions. In this view Venice can be seen as a true example of modernity: it does not stand in the past, neither in the present but in the future.
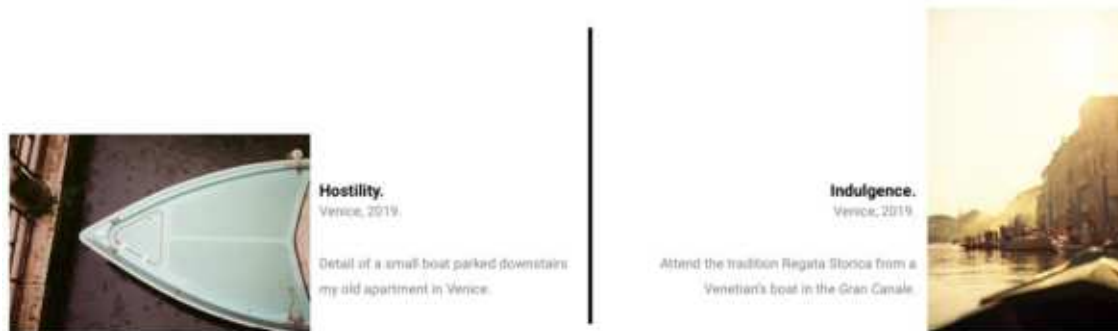
3.5.5 Indulgence vs hostility

Figure 30 - Hostility vs Indulgence

The last pair of opposites is represented by the contraposition between the concepts of *hostility* and *indulgence*. Venice is incredibly fascinating as it is a complex city to live in.

The hostility wall, therefore, stands for the challenges that derive from making the choice to reside in the floating city; difficulties that may be related mainly to the lack of services and what we can call the "touristification" of its economic system. On the other hand, conscious of the inevitable issues that arise, its citizens and the accessibility to the local community create a welcoming environment for those whose desire is to move in its historical center (see again in the interviews in chapter 2 stressing this opposition). What at the end will make a difference I believe is the acceptance of the negative sides that are part of the city and the willingness to find your place in this delicate habitat. More than many other Italian and international cities, Venice requires quite an effort and certainly the sensation of hostility will soon find you if you decide to move there. Nevertheless, the same sensation will soon vanish if you let the city, and its citizens, the time to welcome you inside of it and finally, they will show how in fact easy can be to build a life there.

It is true that you can either love it or hate it; the city forces you to rediscover a radically different way of living a city, changing your old habits in favor of a new relationship with the place where you reside. Using the words of Henry James, those who felt over the heels for Venice often grow a sentiment of possession and jealousy for the city and wish "to be alone, to be original, to have for himself at least the air of making discoveries" (James, 1909).

The city has the immense power of being almost impossible to rationalize and schematize. Describing the experience *in* and *of* it cannot be done expect by taking an objective and

unilateral point of view. However, there could be some common concepts that often are present in the stories, description and thoughts of the people who live in it.

The above-mentioned concepts can be grouped in a scheme composed by imaginary lines connecting pairs opposites; your personal experience of the city is built depending on where you find yourself in the line (Figure 31). Is Venice a city stuck in the past or is, instead, the perfect place where innovation can be found? Do you see its being surrounded by water as a threat or as a gift or maybe something in between the two?
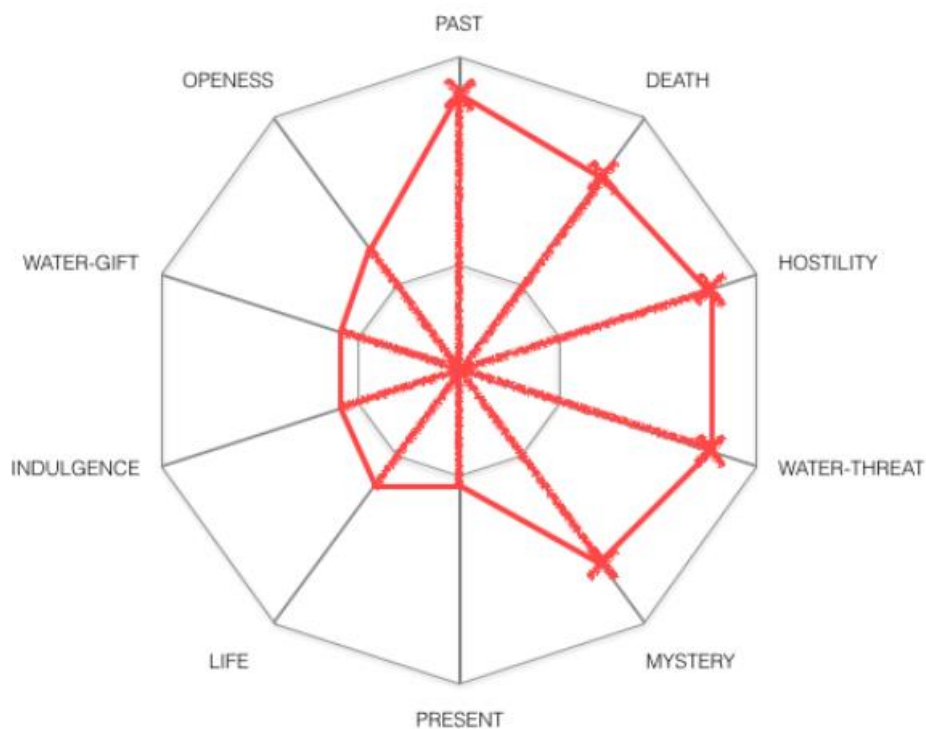
Figure 31 - Graphic representation of Venice in contrast, a possible personal experience

For someone Venice could result as a city anchored in its past where you cannot live in because of its hostility but at the same time possessing an incredible charm and mystery power, together with its unique natural environment. For some other Venice could be considered modern in being so adaptive and one of a kind, with a welcoming community and at the same time gives you an international cultural market and immense artistic life.

What was photographically shown in the online exhibition is graphically represented in Figure 31. Following Lévi-Strauss's logic, the scheme represents the basic structure of oppositions when thinking of defining the myth of Venice (or at least my myth of Venice) and giving meaning to the personal experience of the city.

CONCLUSIONS

We started in the first chapter to answer the question "*how can the experience of and in Venice be defined?*" taking into consideration the first group of people related to the city, its citizens. They were asked to submit an image that was representative of their experience of the city during the lockdown and a text in which they freely expressed their opinions, hopes and annotations. Later their response material was analyzed in order to grasp the community of words that represents concepts and thoughts. What emerged was the feeling and interpretation of their city as hurt, desolated but still and filled with a deafening silence. Contrasting concepts characterized their texts, nevertheless some common concerns were found in the clearly depicted issue of tourism vs residentiality. Moreover, the consequences of the pandemic were particularly felt in the most important element of the city: water. Overall, what was depictable from their text and images was at the same time concern for the economic consequences of the city and the joy of having had the opportunity to witness their city without what by many has been defined as its cancer: "overtourism".

The second chapter took as a possible interpretative channel the point of view of remote workers, a category of workers that have the possibility to move their residency based mainly on their personal needs as in fact their professional career isn't anchored to a determined location. The results included both negative and positive aspects related to their experience; 1) the over-tourism problem, 2) the complex bureaucracy and the 3) difficulties in finding a place to stay in Venice where the main issues while 4) life easiness, 5) the peculiar natural environment, 6) the strong community life and the even impactful 7) sensory dimension composed the list of pros. Further research could deepen the analysis made as their presence could change the mechanism in which the city has been stuck in for way too long.

The last chapter took a different approach in trying to define the meaning of experience. Starting from its historical and cultural mythimization and with the aid of Lévi-Strauss's theory, an interpretative scheme was built composed of pair of opposites concepts. Venice is here interpreted as a system of connected contrast which and the experience of each individual change depending on how they stand in the lines between the poles.

This thesis gives a different interpretation of the experience connected to the city of Venice by analyzing how it changed after the Covid-19 pandemic and how this could influence the future of the city. Clarifying this aspect, it's the starting point from which Venice's issues can be better contextualized and its problems faced. Insights from the three different chapters could help in the definition and design of possible future policies.

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Appendix A - Request

Ciao, mi presento: mi chiamo Sara e sono una studentessa universitaria di Ca Foscari. Sto svolgendo una ricerca per la mia tesi di laurea magistrale. E'una indagine sulla percezione della città di Venezia durante la crisi del coronavirus. Le informazioni da te fornite saranno utilizzate esclusivamente per la tesi. Tutti i dati da te forniti saranno resi anonimi, e trattati in maniera aggregata e ai soli fini della ricerca. La risposta a questo messaggio costituisce una accettazione dell'utilizzo limitato a questi scopi.

Negli ultimi mesi, a causa dell'emergenza coronavirus sono cambiate tante cose nelle nostre vite, una delle quali è il rapporto che abbiamo con la città di Venezia e il modo in cui la percepiamo.

Puoi selezionare una fotografia da te scattata dall'inizio dell'emergenza (o in alternativa puoi scattarne una) che rappresenti la tua percezione di Venezia nell'ultimo mese.

La fotografia deve rappresentare un tuo pensiero, sentimento, o sensazione. La sua qualità e il suo valore artistico non sono rilevanti nella scelta. L'unica richiesta è quella di contestualizzare la fotografia in un ambiente esterno al tuo domicilio.

Inoltre, ti chiediamo di accompagnare la fotografia con un testo scritto che esprima, con almeno due frasi, perché hai scelto proprio quell'immagine e la storia dietro ad essa. *[Cos'è cambiato nel rapporto che hai con la città di Venezia? La percepisci diversamente? In che modo?]*

Ti prego di aggiungere anche le seguenti informazioni che mi aiuteranno ad analizzare i dati raccolti:
- *Genere (M/F/Altro):*
- *Luogo e anno di nascita:*
- *Professione:*
- *Hai attività legate al turismo? Se sì, quali?*
- *Da quanti anni vivi a Venezia?*
- *In che area di Venezia vivi?*

Puoi inviare la tua risposta a Sara tramite email (s⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛) o Whatsapp (⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛).

Ti ringrazio moltissimo se vorrai aiutarmi in questo mio progetto!

Appendix B – Graphs
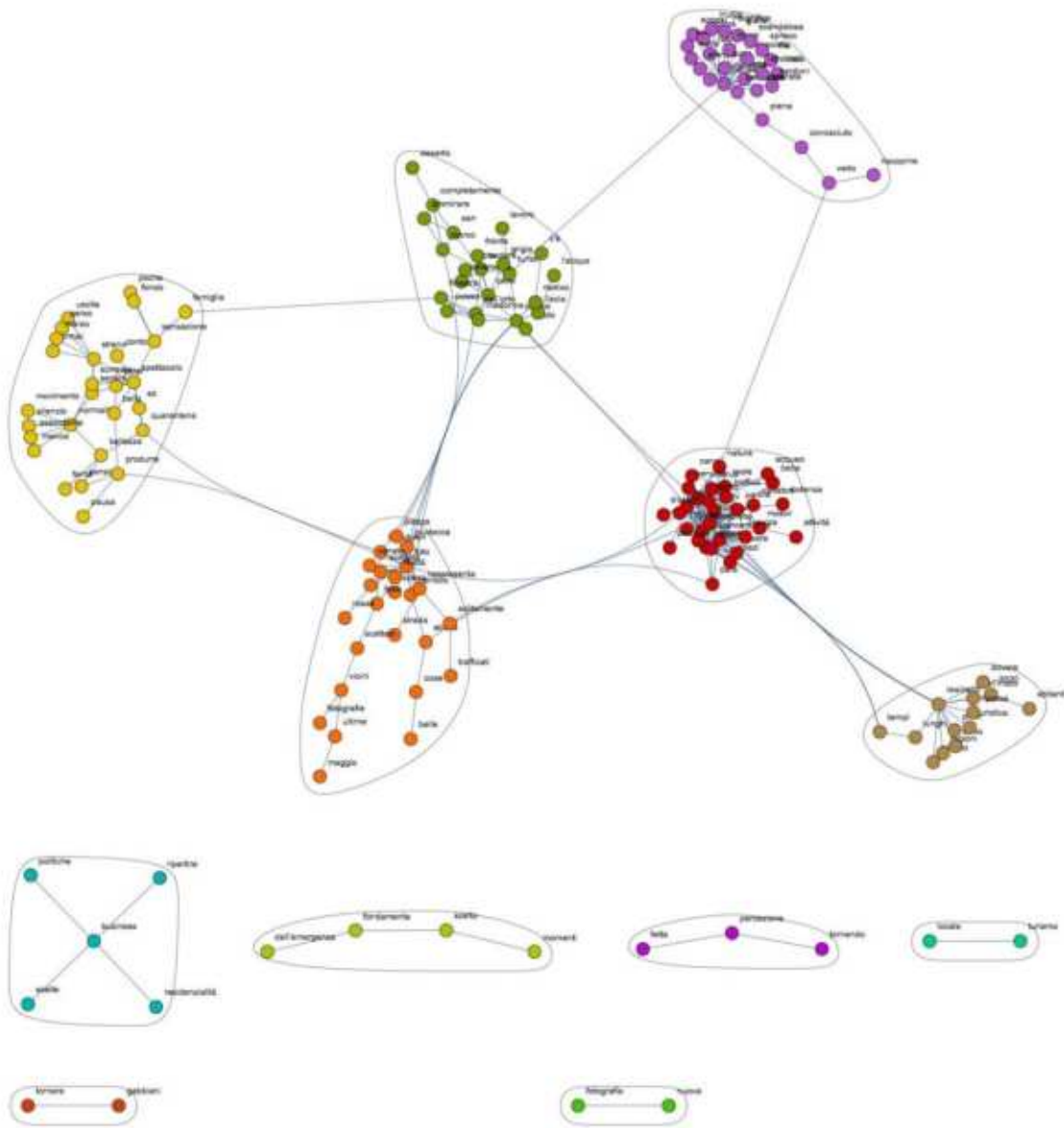
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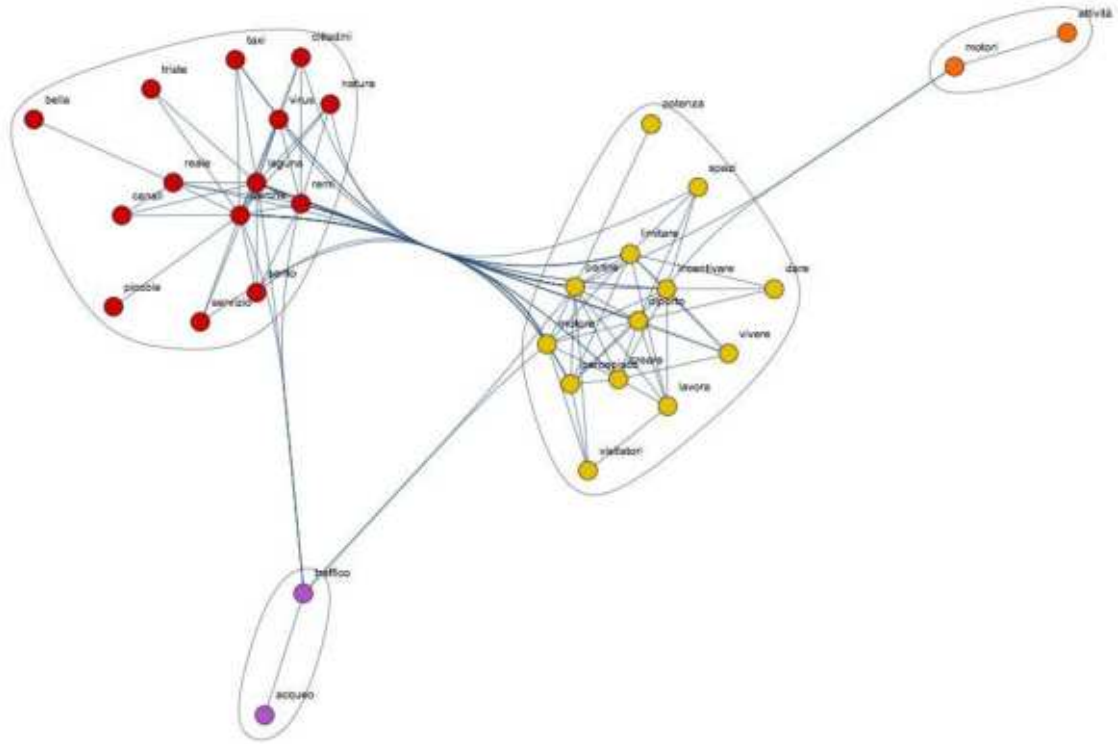
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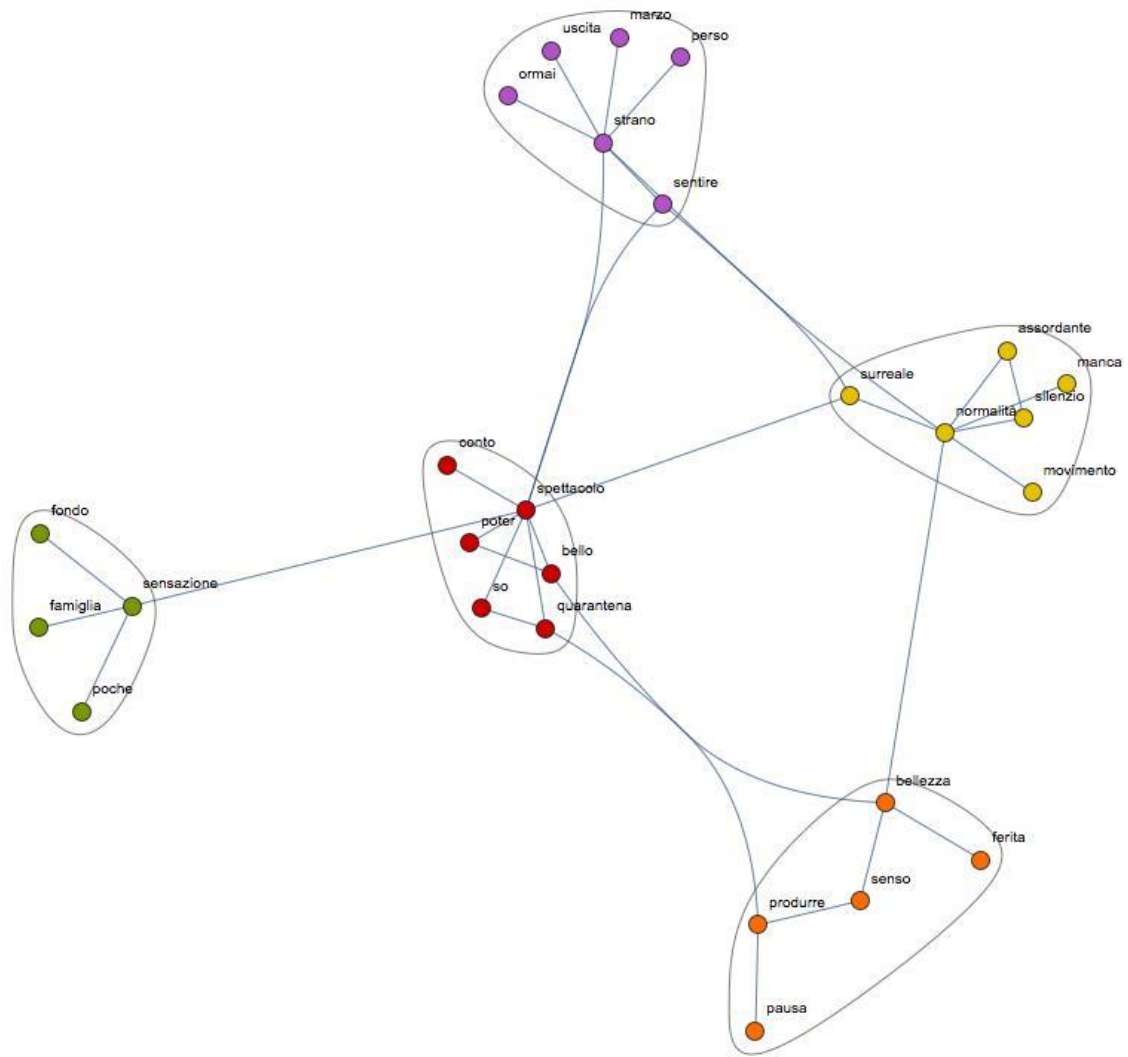
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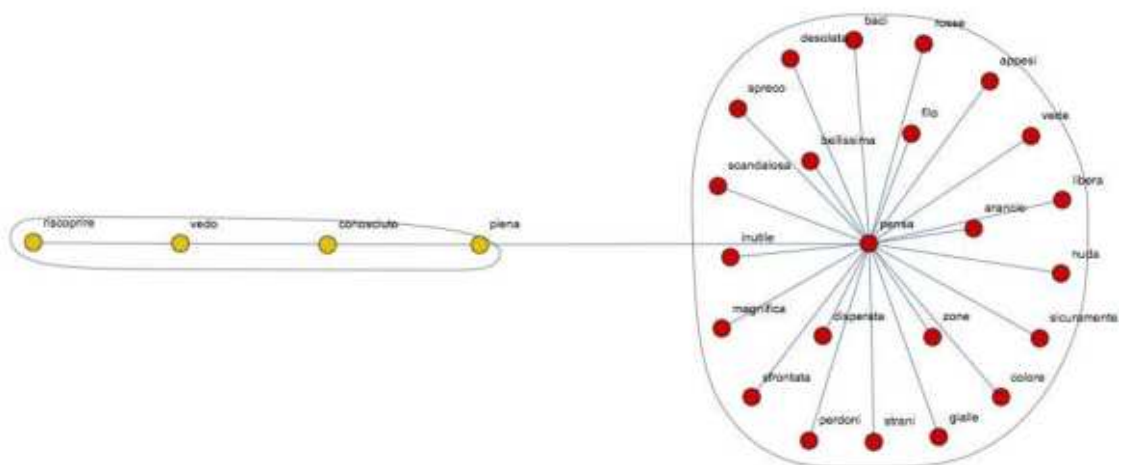
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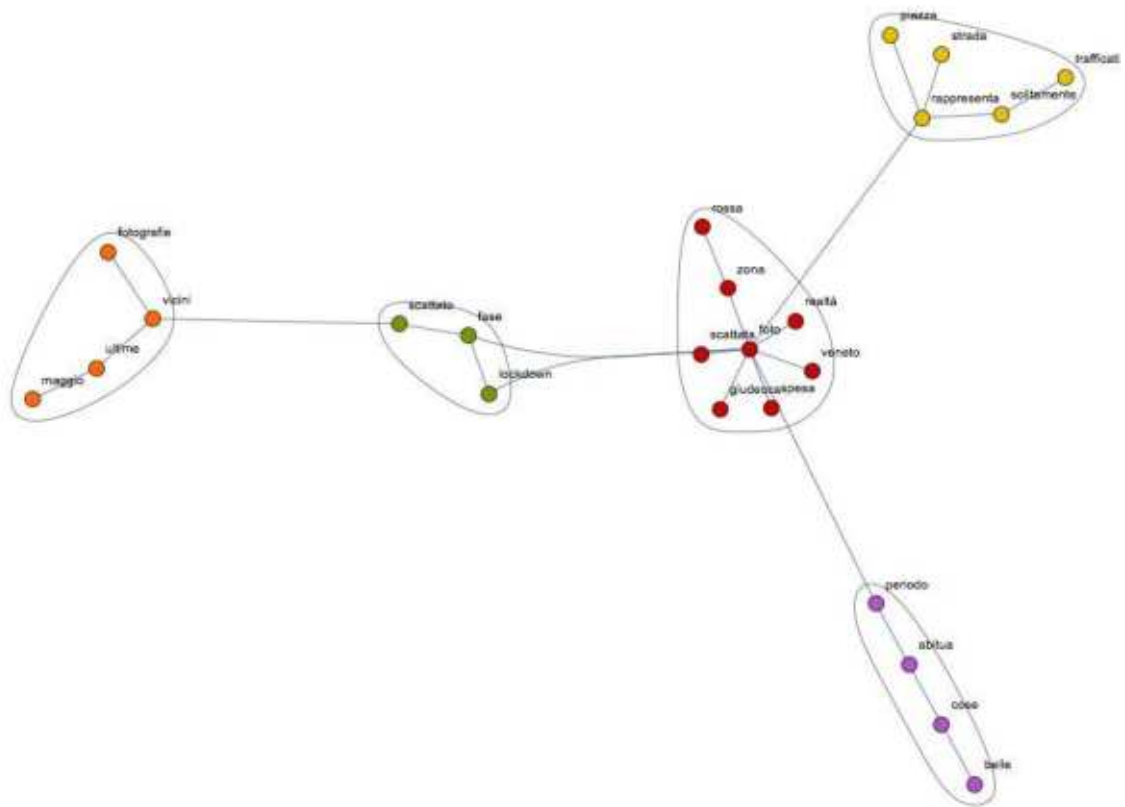
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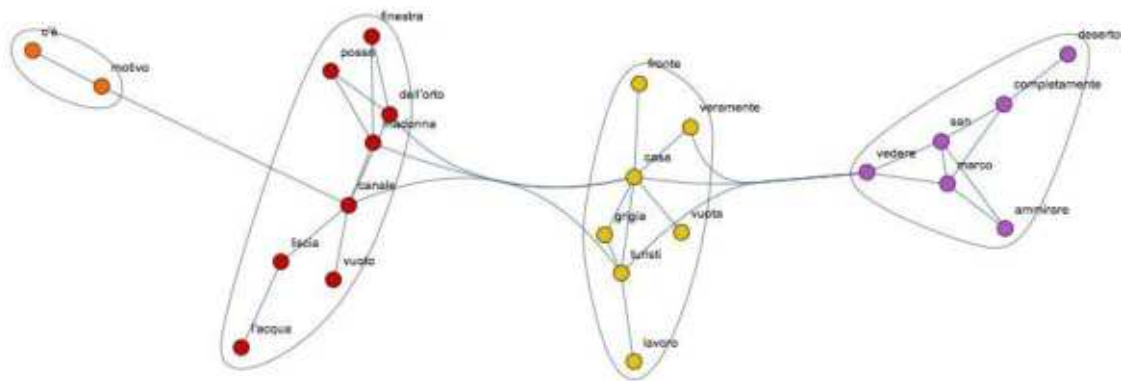
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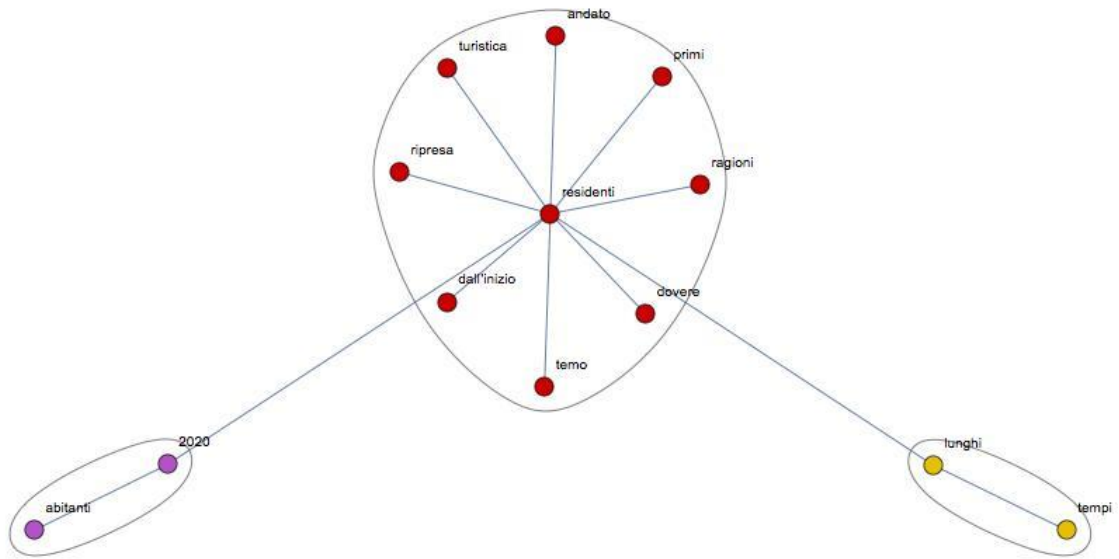
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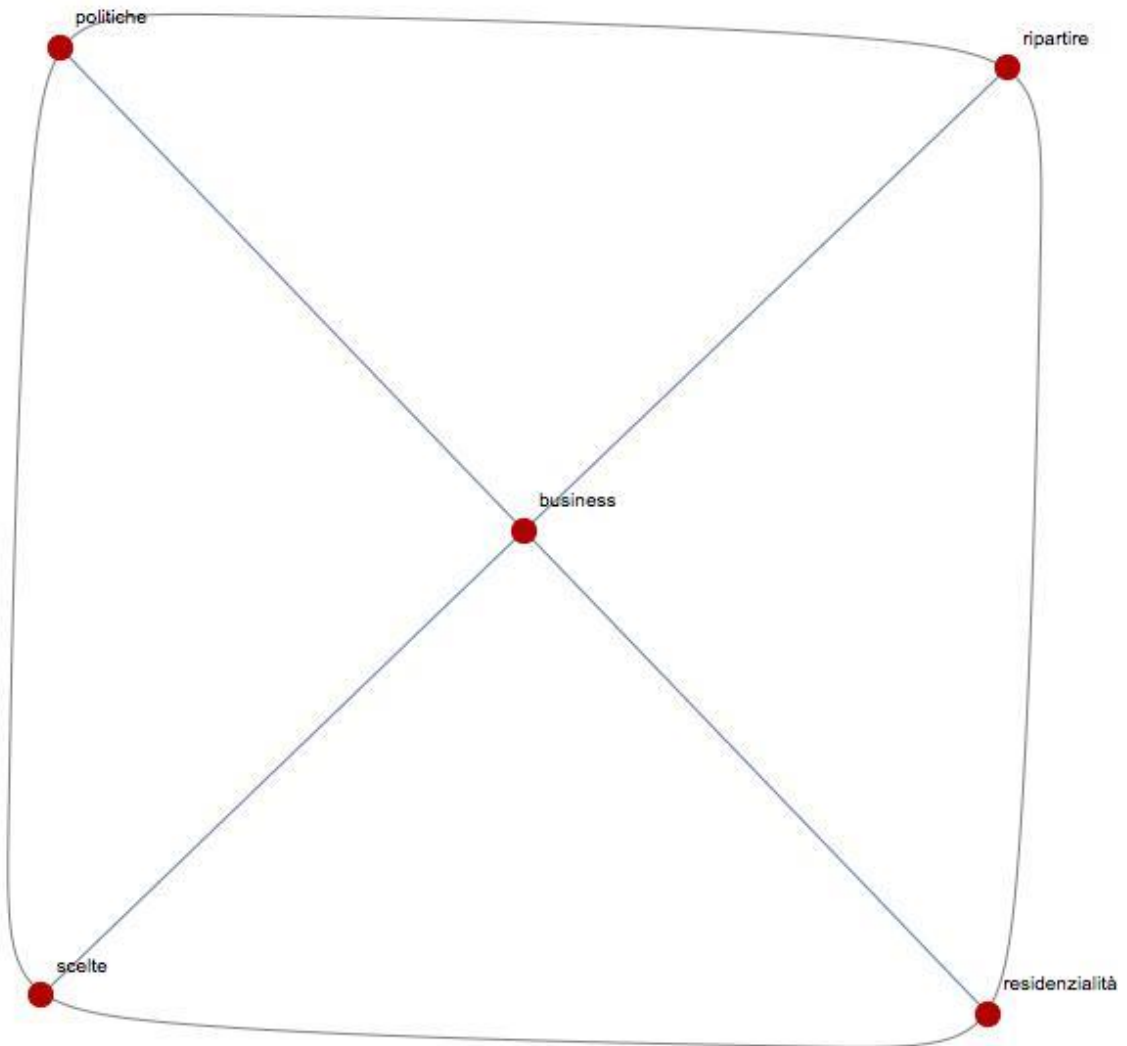
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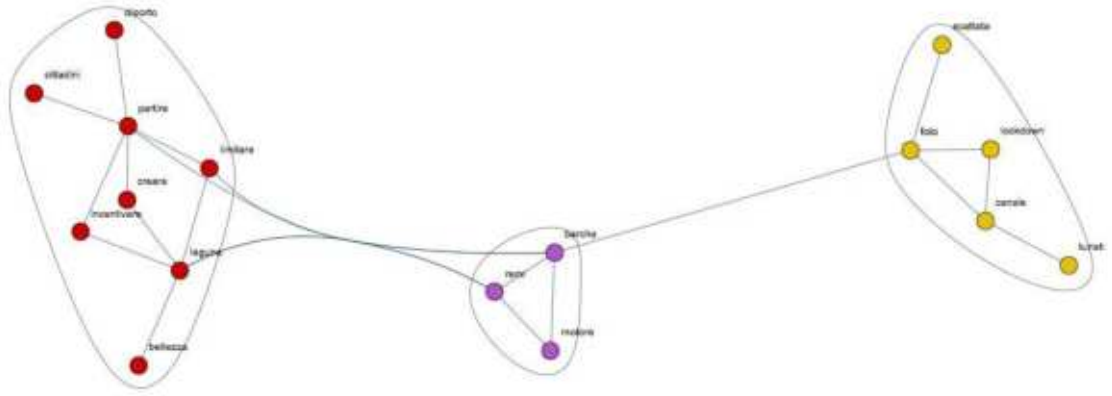
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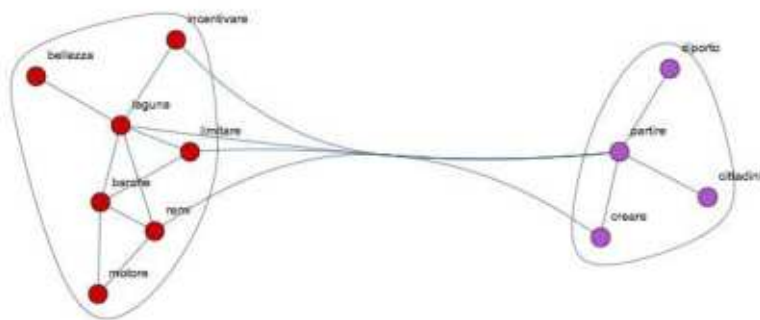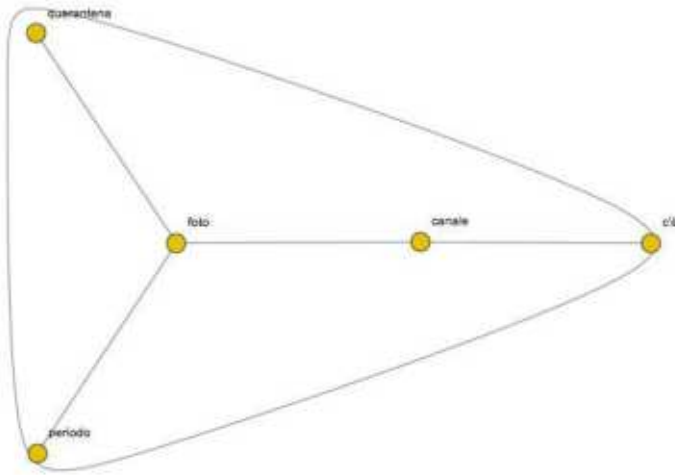
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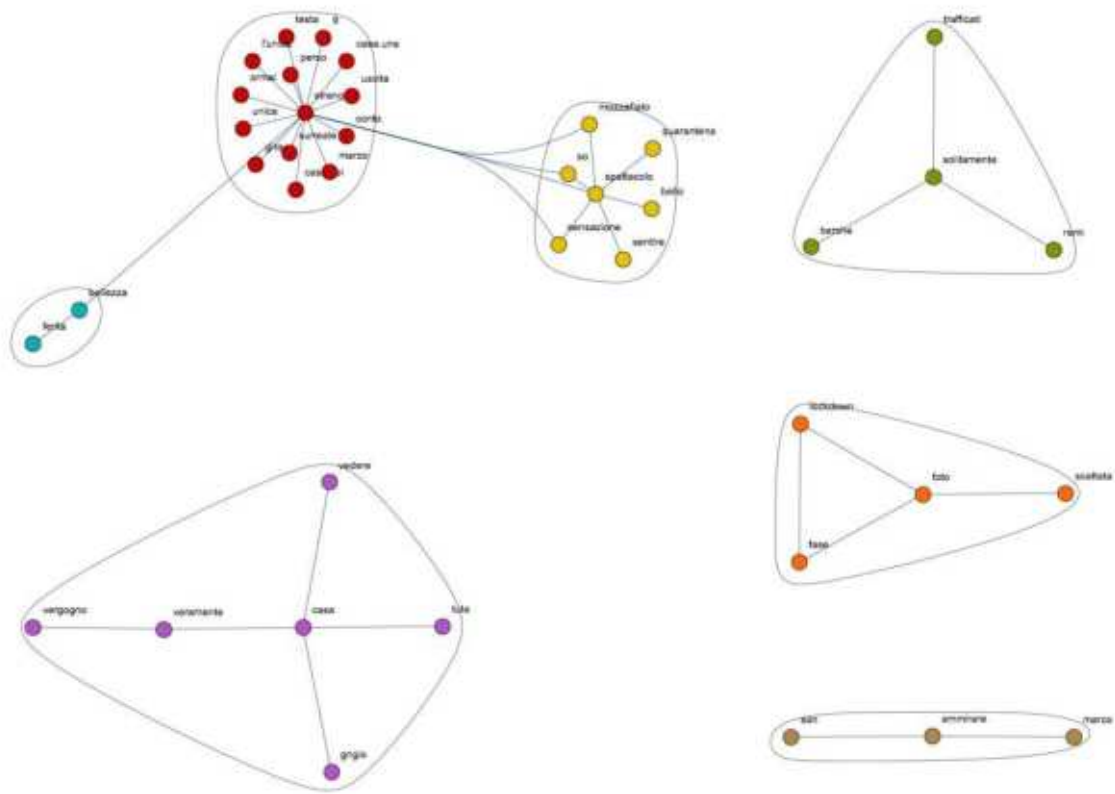
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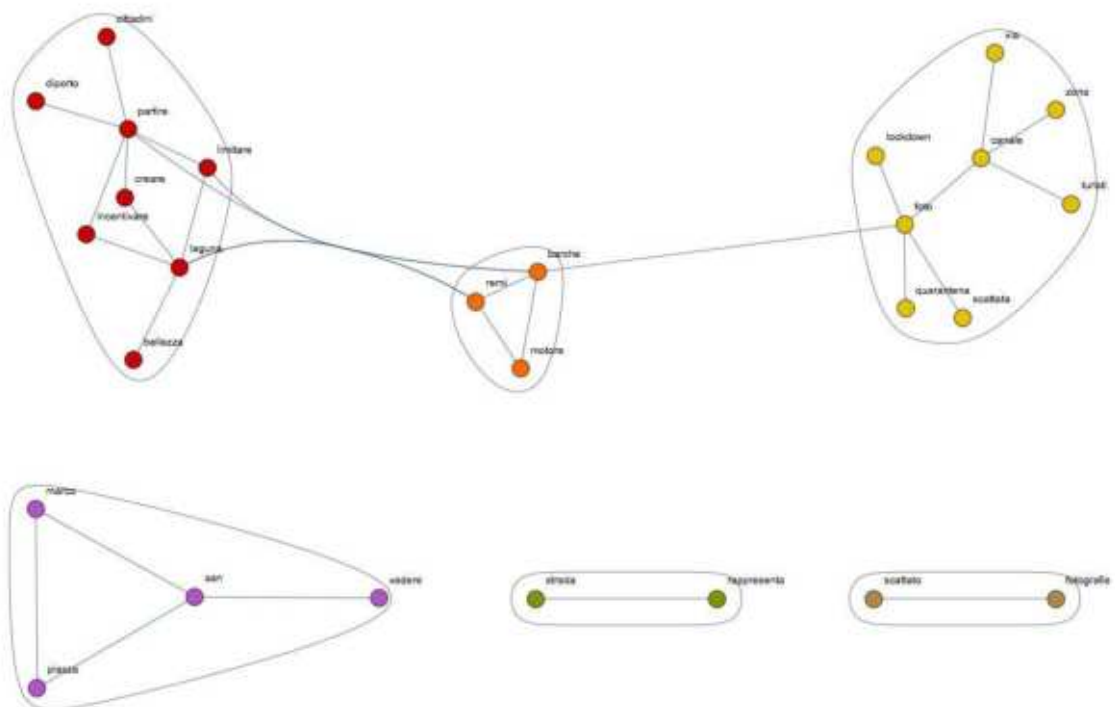
Graph Chapter 1 _ L [streets]

Graph Chapter 1 _ M [water]

Appendix C – Interviews' transcripts

1) Luc Steels ——————————————

S: First of all I would like to ask you to give me a little introduction of who you are.

L: It's a very difficult question, I don't know how much you want to know. Well, I spend most of my time in science and specially computer science and within computer science in the field of AI. So, my first background was actually in humanities, so languages and philosophy. But then I kind of tumbled into computation linguistics. This was in the early 70's. So then I studied computer science for real and then I was into AI for the rest. AI is a varied field, you know, it's not one thing. So, robotic and vision, language processing, problem solving, I mean all this things. I have also been interested in art. So this goes back in my time when I was a student. Then it was a lot about theater and music but then came visual art. So there's always been back and forth activities about, you know, writing music sometimes. For example, uh, I wrote for operas and then also did the performance of it. If I think back how we managed to do that it was a crazy idea but then I had a lot of things like that. The visual arts, umm, this place (Venice) is very famous for visual arts by the way. So I have been in many places. I lived in Venice of course and I am originally from Belgium but then I lived 5 years in the USA. So I was at MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and I worked in New York. Well, they're relatively near. So I lived there and then, uh, back to Brussels, but I founded a lab in Paris so I lived 15 years in Paris. For a while I lived in Tokyo because I started working intensely with Sony. I enjoy Tokyo greatly. It's a really nice place to live. I lived two years in Berlin. That was also very nice. But then I decided to explore more the South of Europe. Uh, there was an opportunity in Spain in Barcelona. So I lived there, now, I guess seven years in Barcelona. So you could say that I'm very used to moving around the world and I considered the whole of Europe as my terrain. Um, uh, so Italy was always on my list, you know, since I came here the first time as a student to Pisa to do a summer school, but, you know, I didn't know how to realize it.

S: And your first time here in Venice?

L: Well, I used to come into Venice regularly, at least once a year. S: For work?

L: Yeah. Always with conferences because I mean, on top of living in these places, I, of course went around, you know, all the time giving talks and doing projects. So I already had connections a lot with Pisa. We did projects with the university there ... Um, Pisa but Rome

also, very intense relationships but then with people in Trento, Bologna. Actually, almost ... when I started the Sony computer lab in 96 the Japanese people said why don't you start your lab in Europe so I decided where and then I seriously considered Italy, em, Pisa because I knew but also Bologna. But I didn't have contacts really. I considered Berlin but this was before the East development. I didn't know a lot of people otherwise that would have been a nice lace.

S: and then how you decided to stay here in Venice?

L: well I used to come here on various meeting, some very wonderful. So I got to know the city and also this area.

S: you know live in this area?

L: yeah I live around the corner. So you know it was not strange to me. Well it sort of happened, you know, Massimo has a big role in my coming here because we have dinner on the Island in Burano, in the context of small workshops on language. So I was preparing a proposal for a call and so after some chatting I decided to join. So this is the immediate trigger to make it possible. So you need an immediate trigger. So that is when it happened but I was already, actually, I was involved in the ECLT. From the beginning, I was a member of the founding board. There was always this idea of coming to ECLT and doing a project in Venezia. And it never happened. But again I was already writing for the project and then it happened.

S: Which were your expectations before coming here for the first time?

L: I thought about Venice as a very special place with a very rich history I mean in music but also the Biennale because I come almost every year to the Biennale. So a place which is like a hub for cultural activities and also scientific places where workshops are happening and people like to visit. So anyway it's a gradual process.

S: How your daily routine changed coming here in Venice? Because it is completely different compered for example to Tokyo or Paris.

L: So you cannot expect the same thing as in Berlin. Young people now go to Berlin. Well, how it is different? There are some things which are better then expected and there are some things very problematic. If you arrive in a new city, I mean, in the beginning, if you arrive in Tokyo, it's very, uh, bizarre to get used to it. When I lived there, they didn't even have English on the names of the subway. So positive things and negative things. Let's talk about the positive. Let's say particularly here in Sant' Elena that you're actually very close to nature.

The positive thing is also that these cultural activities are there and of course I knew that already but so there is not disappointment. And I think that Ca Foscari you know I find it a sympathetic university. In terms of how they present themselves, the image and also things they do so that is positive although I don't have much time to participate to a lot of activities they organize. But there seems to be a lot going on. I regret I cannot do more of workshops. So that is positive. The place where I live is quite pleasant. And you don't have the massive flows of tourists. It is also easy to get here and that's a surprise. Because you know the first time that you arrive here in Venice and maybe you take the bus to Piazzale Roma and then you take the number one to Sant'Elena but then progressivly you learn that there is the number 6 so you become more optimal in traveling. The vaporetto is very well organized so this are good things. Also telecommunication is optimal, I was the first one to have here in Sant'Elena an optical connection. But at the moment I am on a conflict because I couldn't come to pay bills because of Covid but now I paid and they are saying you paid too late so you are thrown out of the system and I have to get a new line and all these things, so that this a bit, but in terms of, if it works with the technical, which is pretty crucial, at the moment the Telecom infrastructure is good. I mean you wouldn't expect on this island to have the optical connection. I am still thinking more about the positive things. I also found the colleague and people ... it's very high level, you know...

S: So you found out a really good network of people

L: Yeah! There are a lot of people here which I could have had interaction with, which I know who are here and, um, but everybody is focused and I'am too on my projects.

S: and you ever found someone that changed maybe something in the way you are working, that had a strong impact on your work here?

L: yeah, there are at least, as far as I know, few meeting points where you would go and accidentally meet someone. But it is not likely here that I would know everyone whereas some place, cities have a critical mass of people and even if you don't know them yet you start talking and then you start talking...so you know that if you go there you will find someone

L: and sadly a lot of people who work in Ca Foscari they live outside the city and I understand why but I think this is one of the things the city should do ... to think about not only the students but the people who work here and can afford and should have the priority to live here. This is a very important point. So then maybe I can list a few ... you know I don't want

to criticize because I am a guest in the city but ... it's not easy to deal with the bureaucracy, the city hall, they should make it easier to get inserted into the fabric of the city. So now I am a resident but it was a long process but it was very disappointed actually. After a lot of very complex things I found finally an office in Ca Foscari that helps you, they were key and without them I would have never done it ... [example of INPS] I think that is very discouraging for people who want to live here, and then you have to go to Mestre to register as a new citizen and I found it quite shocking. You don't receive any notes or proof that you are a new citizen, you know in some cities there is a kind of ceremony, you come to the town hall and the major welcomes you but here ... so this is something that is simple to fix, it doesn't cost much. If you want to attract people to come and work here and spend money. I mean, this can be an influx for people that come here to work, they bring more money into the city. If you want to do that then this kind of welcoming infrastructure is I think a very important element and also to learn from other cities like in websites but there are not a lot of websites for people like me here. I find in Ca Foscari that the main problem is also the hierarchical attitude, the attitude towards the rules. I find it amazing in fact the number of rules which is then stifling the activities. This is also a real problem and it is also in the mentality of people that have internalized the system. I you come from somewhere else you say why do you have son many rules? You find that attitude also in Spain but still less then here. So people if they want to do something say "how can I do it" they first say "Am I allow to do it?" and this is totally the opposite as America. This sort of rule approach is I think problematic for businesses. So of course the businesses are more free, but they are confronted with all sorts of rules, which are obscure, irrational.

They seem to be in certain corners of the university .. You know, they're still living in the, I don't know which century, but not 21st century. So they they're a bit hierarchical yeah. I mean, in my lab, uh, I consider everybody the same. Whether you're a student or you're a professor or you are in the illustration. We are one family and we go together but here the gap between the administration and the people is very big. I mean we are cooperating, we have to get to know each other. It is not everywhere, in the management department I think is less but in other departments is quite a hierarchical system. And this is one reason why people then leave, not because of Venice itself but they want to escape from this sort of hierarchical ... with rules that are against you. I heard this from a few people so this is an issue. And I think also that this is maybe another point. I understand that the tourist is really

bad. It is the cancer of Venice. I know the mayor doesn't think that way, but ... you see if you emphasize tourism, the way they have done, then you make other activities impossible. So it's a choice. Like in Sant Elena there a lot of places that are empty and you could have a thriving community here. People, you know, who work remotely and all that, but then you have to change the philosophy, you cannot have end tourism.

S: How your five senses perceive the city?

L: yeah, well, Okay. One thing which I did not say, this is a bit surprising, Venice has a pollution problem. So sound pollution, not everywhere, of course. And then air pollution. And you wouldn't expect it because you are next to the sea ... so this is also an issue. So I think that one of the really great things about Venice is that the city is quiet but it's not quiet everywhere. I mean, there are boat traffic, is so intense that you live almost next to the highway. And the air pollution is part of that. So if you talk about senses it works on your senses. Of course there is the beauty of the city that you see and if you walk in some area it is so lovely because it is quite and what you hear is human noise which is ok. Every city now in the world is trying to make their buses electric. Uh, I mean, there's no reason why they cannot be electric boats instead of the diesel boats. Now, unfortunately the cruise ships also. That's another shocking thing. Right now at the moment, they're not there, but I'm not sure this is going to last, This is an incredible pollution source. Of course it's good if there was a proper sewage system but I think that the pollution due to the boat is much more a problem than anything else. A normal city would do works for. So you get the feeling that there is no investment that the money that's generated is not invested in the city itself. I don't think the election is going to change much. I think if I understand correctly, the real problem is that as part of Mestre and you know, the mayor of Venice who doesn't live in Venice has no real sensibility to the city so there's a problem with the city itself in the government of the city. And it shows in many things. I mean like, like, there's, for example, one spot where you could do make a little bridge and that would make the, uh, the walking distance easier to get. Which is thinking about the mobility in the city and in Venice this is not really the case.

S: the next topic is time. Here in Venice is maybe perceive different and you change the way you organize yourself? you perceive the time flows different here compered to other cities?

L: Well yes it does. So people take more time for things. It is not so pressure like in NY for example. It has a lot to do with yourself but it true that there are things that slows you down. There is a difference in time perception. But I really believe in the potential of the city if it is

properly managed, but then the living conditions are the key to that. That should be a kind of Taskforce for the city. for how to encourage people like myself.

S: Ok I am done. Thank you so much

2) Thorbjørn Knudsen ——————————————

S: Let's begin with a brief introduction of yourself, what do you do? Where do you live?

Mr T: Yes. Okay. My name is Thorbjørn Knudsen. I'm a professor of strategy and organization design. My home base is in Denmark in a town called Odense, in the middle. I usually spend two or three months at a university in Barcelona or every spring or in some other places. As you know, researchers they do what sailors did in the old days, they travel a lot. So I'm a researcher, and, and my basis is Denmark.

S: Okay, so you have been in Venice. For how long did you stay?

Mr T : I've been there many times. I've been short stays, but also been longer stays. Three months at least.

S: And the first time you came here? Which were the reasons?

Mr T: To do research with a professor from Università di Ca Foscari, Massimo.

S: And then you decided to come back and stay for a longer span of time or it was also for research why you came back?

Mr T: It was for research and basically Massimo and I got a joint grant. He was part of the grant that was given out by the Danish Research Council and we needed to coordinate so he came here and I came to him, of course. So I very much enjoy Venice as let's say, a working place.

S: That's nice. And which were your expectation before coming in Venice for the first time?

Mr T: Hmm. That's excitement. Like, let's say, like an exotic adventure. It was basically the research was, is the little anchor of the life, of course. But then there was Venice. And I was especially interested in learning to know Venice. For example, the paintings in the churches by the great masters. So there's a church called the Frari and my morning walk in Venice, I did an hour or more every morning. And part of that was to go to the Frari church, and sit and look at the paintings for 10 minutes or 15. So that I had locked into and so I have prepared before some of the places and it was not a big plan. I didn't have a list. I have taken mental notes and say, I would like to do so. And then it emerged and then the second time was a bit longer. And then I also got myself a private teacher. Of course, there was too shorter time

but that one was to learn to speak enough for the people in in the shops and actually my exam was in a "banco" of the family of the teacher in Rialto mercato. So, but the other part was, you know, to learn the culture of Venice. And finally, expectation. I like to cook myself. I'm a great fan of fine cooking, of country cooking of and of course inside and forward, and I expected a lot and to be honest with you, you know, they're not that many nice places. But for example, Massimo was like, okay, you want the "polpette"? You go to "alla Vedova". And you have an "ombra" and so on. Fine. If you want this, you go there. If you want this, you go there. Anyway, so I got carried away now. But expectations were basically what I'm telling you about. Some kind of exotic adventure besides my work.

S: And your opinions about Venice changed after your first experience?

Mr T: Ah, yeah. You know, it's very interesting. There is a change in Venice, and there's a change in my perspective. And the change in my perspective, in the beginning, I felt like a tourist. So, I was like, I lived at Guglie and very soon I thought of this as my, my hood, I belong here. And one day, for example, there were from these big boats, people walking against me, it's slowed me down to half the speed. And I was like, what are they doing here? Okay. So, um, so there was this quick transformation from being a tourist to being, you know, feeling, not like a Venetian, you can never do that, but at least as belonging. So that was the internal perspective, the external one is, of course, this immense amounts of people, and I understand that I'm one of them, but I have the excuse of work. These cruise ships and letting loose 50,000 people, it increased over these years. And that was not nice.

S: Let's talk about your routine in Venice, your daily routine. I would like to know if it was different compared to other cities where you lived.

Mr T: Number one, I like racing bike, let's say 500 kilometres. And I could not take my bike. I have a nice traveling bike. So when I go for longer, it has its own back. And I take the bag and the bike on. I do that in Barcelona, for example. And I was like, what can I do? That was number one. The next thing was of course, the place I've been living. I've had a kitchen so I like to cook. Okay, fine. So, the how can I find it? You know, I love this, going some places and figuring out where's the good stuff and getting a personal relation to the people and and figuring out who's providing good stuff and who is not and who is providing also a good interaction who's not and so on. Number three, like I told you already, the morning walk. So, walking in Venice. And number four, learning Venice by heart without a map. I can still confuse myself but it's more difficult to confuse myself now. So these are parts of it, and it's

hard to put a finger on it, but there's also a rhythm. And it's not so hard actually. There are the boats. So the city has a rhythm of the old days and in a way, is like an old little town and at the same time, it's this Tivoli. These are quite obvious things but I don't have a way I live normally. The other thing is, of course. not specific to Venice, I have it in Barcelona also. I'm in some sense, not so responsible. When I live away from my home. Probably many people know this, that if you're in a hotel room ... I don't need to think about paying my taxes. Insurance. I don't need to think about that, either it's there or is not. What do I need to think about in my hotel room? Well, okay, where's my dinner? For example? Who do I want to meet in the evening? Or what do I need to prepare for the next day? and in this way? Do I cook tonight? Or do I take the easy way out and explore? But in Venice, it's even more pronounced because it's in some sense like Tivoli. In some sense, is very, like a little village for this rhythm in another sense is very abstract.

S: Do you think Venice had in some way an influence on your work?

Mr T: Of course, there are excellent colleagues. It's hard to say, probably more influence on my private life then my work. Then again, there's an indirect effect from the private life to the work, for example, when I'm more calm and happy and so on the work also improves. So the word is happy for me being happy about Venice.

S: What difficult did you find during your stay in Venice and the other hand, which were the positive aspects?

Mr T: So you're asking about difficulties? I didn't find any difficulties at all. And, but if I had been living in Venice for longer time, the difficulty would be ... so the short answer is basically, the extended family of Massimo made it easy. Suppose I'd arrived alone, I had to create that social network myself. So I, I have lots of difficulties I could imagine. But I did not experience any because of that. The next one would be: Venice is a city where you rely on your social connections to an immense degree. Who do you talk to? How do you get to that? And on the other hand, I met and made my contact also alone with the locals. This could happen. But there's a long way to go before you become part of or, let's say, related to a venetian family. Makes sense?

S: Yes. A lot.

Mr T: So that, and the next thing, I will not even speculate because now I'm thinking about Dante and the circles of hell. If I had to talk to authorities about my tax, and and all of these things you see, I can only imagine the immense bureaucracy that could be living in Venice.

S: Then finally, I would like to talk about the five senses. For each one of them, could you please tell me one memory, what comes to your mind that is associated with Venice. Let's start with vision.

Mr T: Okay. Interesting. The vision comes the Dolomites. Looking at those when I walk back from Guglie bridge to my flat. The vision is also these fantastic paintings of Tiziano. And then the water and this this sunsets, and then comes the birds and of course the seagulls but also the traditional birds of the lagoon and of course, being on the water.

S: And so let's talk about smell then.

Mr T: Absolutely disgusting. Smell of "canale" and then the most fantastic smell of the water.

S: What about taste?

Mr T: I can choose one dish, but the dish will have many many tastes. One thing could be "carciofo". Another thing would be ... what do you call this? The sheep that is castrated? These were the two things.

S: What about touch?

Mr T: The touch is this stone. The stone of the bridges. That is a strong memory. I think that is that's probably the strongest. The stones, the different forms and shapes.

S:Hearing?

Mr T: The boats and the people and the birds.

S: Do you think that Venice is a loud city or quite?

Mr T: Where I lived it was quiet in the night and there were a lot of different noises during the day. Yeah. And I love them. Because there can be many noises that are disturbing the mind. These noises were of a kind of a symphony. A special song. And, and the fact that the noises go up and they go down, they follow a rhythm. This whole range and the wave moves during the day. I appreciate a lot.

S: Then, I think that's all, I am really happy with this interview. Thank you. Mr T: Thank you, good evening.

3) Artem de Sibérie ————————————-

S: Hi, so let's begin.

A: Should I Introduce myself right?

S: Yeah!

A: Alright so, my name is Artem, I'm a journalist and a writer from Russia, I'am 35 I live in Brussels now ; I lived in Europe for last 10 years or so, every year I come to Venice one month or some weeks to write.

S: ok, so tell me how many times and how much time?

A: since 2011 I am coming to Venice every year, and I think I've come 12 times and every time for 3 to 4 weeks.

S: So, what are the reasons you came to Venice?

A: To me there are mainly 3 point why I love Venice so much. The first is one of the last places in the developed world, in Europe, that is still quiet, since is not industrialized. I feel very quiet here. No matter where you are in Europe, you're used to hear this engine and noises that makes me thinking in a not nature way. But when I came to Venice, it is very quiet and when I'm home or in the park I'm very productive.

The second reason, is that it is just beautiful, it may be banal but, there are not other places with such concentrations of beauties, you don't need to go very far, you just have to take a small walk and you are immediately surrounded by canals, nature, architecture, the see, animals ... every time I came to Venice I feel like my soul is going through some therapy, I clean all the mess and dirt from me.

The third is very social factor, even if I do not know many people, I really have no friends in Venice, I never feel like I'm alone. Maybe because of how the city it is done, it is not made for cars but still made for humans, immediately you are in some kind of interactions with others, you can not notice other persons, there is always social experience, human experience… These are my 3 reasons..

S: Ok, we were talking also about you expectations before coming to Venice, and when you decided to stay here for a little bit longer. Tell me about that.

A: The very first time it was a tourist experience, I came as every other else to visit the city, it was extremely hot and crowded, it was midsummer difficult to be in Venice and enjoy it fully, so from that experience I knew it would be hot and crowded so I was not disappointed for that, but I had the feeling that I may really enjoy the city if I return during winter when is colder and calmer and try to work, and not just visit museums and doing things, so I came back again and again and it really worked for me and it is my favourite place in Europe and maybe in the world. And I would be happy to move to Venice.

S: So you think your expectations changed once you stayed here a bit longer?

A: Yeah I knew what to expect, my attitude changed yes!

S: How did you spend your time in Venice? What was your routine?

A: Well it is quite boring my routine, I wake up early, about 8:30, than I go outside for a little walk, I go to the bakery I buy something for breakfast, I return home and then I work for few hours, and then after lunch, about 3, I go out for a long walk and I don't go for museums and I don't meet anyone, I sit by the water I look at the see, sometimes I take a boat to lido or and island, after this walk ,that is about 3 hours long I return, I work a little bit more, then I make myself a dinner, and then I read or work more that if I don't go to bed early, again I go for a little walk and then I come home and I go to bed.

S: And do you think your routine here in Venice is different than normal?

A: Well, yes I'm more productive, I'm calmer, I'm alone most of the time so I think about my things, I work and I even walk a lot more.

S: if you have to say one thing that capture your attention, while you were here in Venice. What would it be?

A: It is the presence of water.

S: Do you think Venice influenced in some way your work?

A:Yes, it makes me work and my novellas are sited in Venice so yes!

S: Let's talk about the difficulties you found here in Venice and negative things.

A: The only negative thing for may point of view, for what I know it is tourism, I can see how it destroys Venice and how it make it very hard or impossible for the locals, and even for people like me to enjoy the city, sometimes I think not to return just to not be one of this people that contributes to the destruction of the city. To me is not about the aesthetic quality of the city, we can preserve it aesthetically, but what it is at stake is the should of the city is the cultural life in it's every day form. And that of course is going to disappear when there will be no more permanent residents in the city, and this is vary dangerous and very bad.

S: now let's talk about people in Venice do you think is easy to find a community here? And if you met someone interesting here?

A: Well I understand when people say that Venetians are hostile, I experienced it but at the same time for my experience it is easy I think to have human interactions and make friends because life is much more social so people are always in bars and caffes, so from this point of view I think it is actually easier to socialize and make friends. I don't have really friends maybe because I come here once a year for a month but I have acquaintances that I meet

every time I come back to Venice, and I met them by accident in the street or other.. so yeah it is possible to make friends.

S: Now the weird questions about the five senses. For each one of the five senses please tell me the first thing that comes to your mind.

A: So smell, the small the Venice has in winter coming from the sea, something typical venetian, the sight is water and the reflection of light on water an the little waves Venice has. The hearing.. hearing is the alarm of the acqua alta that is very unique sound. The touch is the old walls when you walk in the little streets or you pass a bridge and you touch it is very textured and old and the taste is Aperol Spritz!

S: We are done, we did it in 13 minutes so not bad.

A: Do you have any other things you want to talk?

S: If you want to tell me something more about you!

A: Yeah, I lived in many different places, in Europe and Siberia then I tried to settle in S. Petersburg a bigger city but cultural still in Russia, than in a small and big places, Pennsylvania, NYC and California then I spent half a year in latin America in Ecuador and Israel, Luxemburg and now Brussels, I loved many places but to this moment I prefer Venice. Even if it is not perfect, I know there are many issues, but to me it is perfect, if the life is preserved, the local life, for the moment it has this authentic life and of course the beauty, the art and even the air, even if polluted by the cruises by the industrial sites, still I feel I can breathe deeply in Venice and I love what I inhale I love the smell, I think the air is cleaner I can see the stars and moon this in not happening in big cities like Brussels and at the same time is not like you're in the middle of no where still Venice is a cultural capital of the wall, it is amazing that with 40000 inhabitants it attracts so much international culture, thanks to biennale, artist or people that comes for the culture that there is. So for this reasons it is perfect to me.

S: Do you think Venice needs something like co-working spaces?

A: No I don't like this idea I really don't, it is something really fake to me, it may need open libraries. I tried, I don't like I think it is empty, but a few libraries may be make Venice more open to people like me.

S: How did you find the first time your apartment?

A: The very first time, my partner was working for the European commission and he found an apartment for the member of the commission, than I used their Airbnb and then I stayed in in hotels for a bit..

S: ok I think we are done here, thanks.

A: Bye Bye!

4) Neil Maiden ——————————————

S: So present yourself.

N: I'm an academic I'm still employed full time in London, however I have been living here in Venice for almost 4 years, I arrived in Feb. 2017, we had a house in Castello. That is my life, it is a split life. Pre-COVID I would spend 60, 70 days a year in London
to do my normal face to face teaching and then the rest of the time in Italy so legally I live In Italy I pay taxes in Italy, ecc.. that's it. It is a permanent move, we sold our house in London, we don't plan going back.

S: When you decided to come in Venice for the first time, which were the reasons?

N: It was partly Brexit, it is such a disaster. It was clear that things would not be going well, there was an increasing racism so we discussed, my wife is German so she is a member of the European Union Citizenship, we discussed before the referendum in Britain, we decided to go if they decided to leave, we had quite a long a long discussion about where to go, Sicilia or Venice, and we came here, so it was partly Brexit. We would have moved anyway, it just happened sooner. I lived in London for a long time, is a great city but also an hard city, the weather is not that nice so, yeah there were a lot of reasons to move.

S: Why did you decided Venice over Sicily?

N: I think it was about flying, because I had to fly back regularly. I'm talking about the pre-COVID. I could get to Treviso and fly with Ryanair and EasyJet. It was easy to travel. It is only 1:45 hours and it is not expensive, from Palermo or Catania instead it is 3 hours and also it is easier to settle in the north of Italy. I have friends in Sicilia and moving there without speaking a little bit of Italian would have been challenging.

S: Before you moved to Venice have you ever been in Venice like a tourist?

N: Yeah I came here first in 1980's when I was backpacking so I visited the city and then I really discovered the city in 1999. I ran a conference with Telecom Italia, so there I

discovered Venice for the first time and then I did 6 weeks of staying here in Venice in 2013, I rented an apartment and lived here for 6 weeks where I discovered there's a real life here.

S: So which were your expectations before actually moving to the city? About the daily routines, what to do and difficulties for example.

N: I mean, I expected more bureaucracy, more paper works, in England it is worse, Italian can be efficient sometimes, and then it went quite well. Most things are digital so I can go in different offices online, I didn't even have to see my commercialist that is one thing. We ended up to live closer to piazza San Marco that I would think, so I'm aware that the tourism in July and August is a pain, but it is not so bad. It is actually quieter than I thought, I knew it would be quiet since there's no cars but it is actually quieter

than I thought, also more social life, community life than I thought, you know. You hear often that Venice is dying, that people are living and so on, but it is not actually true. There are a lot of social groups that exist, so in this sense it is more social than London, it is quite easy to make friends.

S: So do you think it was easy for you? because I interviewed a lot of people telling me quite the opposite regarding paperwork and problems with the community.

N: There are a lot of things we can say, when I moved, it helped that I'm older and I have a lot of money compared to when I was in my 30's, money helps, we employed a very competent agent, so for example he already connected the wifi and the cables were already connected so where was internet in the house so that I could start working immediately while the furniture were still arriving. So it was very efficient. Then I think there is a tendency for some foreigners to come to Venice and say Venetians can't do things, we know other German or English people they think Venetians are stupid, I don't think that helps, I think that you can not go to another country and impose your values and behaviours to others, I think you have to fit in so why other people have these problems I don't really know! I mean why are you living here if there are so many problems? But can you give me some examples of these problems?

S: There was this professor of AI that had problems with Eni and so on, about going to Mestre and not Venice just to sign some papers. Because you must move to another city, you have to take the train etc.

N: Yeah it happened to me when I was sorting my papers for the "anagrafica" we went to the office near Rialto and they said that we have to go to the one in Mestre, so we had to run but

these are just small things I think this happen in any city, it happens in Brussels, I don't think this is unique to Venice. If you live in a city that is in large part still a medieval city, you have to accept some limitations, you have advantages and disadvantages, last week I had an appointment in stazione and then we went to this small office in Mestre and it was fine.

S: About your daily routine, is it radically different than London, or how is it different from the one you had in other cities?

N: Everything is local here, in London when I was head of the department I had to leave house at 7 to be at the office at 8, take the underground one hour, and I would have travelled most of the days, towards the end of my time in London I split my days so I did

like 5 hours of office during the day but still I had to travel a lot and it was so tiring, you spend 2 hours a day walking or getting to the train. So I heard this story when I came to Venice of old people never leaving Castello for 60 years, it seemed to me impossible but now that I'm here I kind of understand it, my neighbor hardly goes after Campo Santa Maria Formosa. The localness means it is easy makes your life more efficient, my life and my work are more efficient now. In London everything is really spread out, it can take 1.30 hours to get to the other side of the city you can spend a huge amount of time traveling. Here even if I have to go to Ca Foscari or San Servolo that is near to S. Zaccaria it is 15 minutes from where I leave. This would be impossible in London. I think it is about efficiency, living locally, I think these are the differences.

S: So if you have to choose one thing that capture your attention during your experience in Venice what would that be?

N: The quality of life, maybe if I were in my 20's Venice would be a little bit small and boring but I'm in my 50's so it gives me quality of life, since I moved here I lose weight, I'm much healthier, I eat and sleep better, the city is on human scale, people move at human speed, you can say hello to people, if you do this in London you get arrested. Venice isn't cheap, but you can live a certain kind of life if you have a certain kind of income.

S: Do you think Venice influenced your work?

N: yes! I mean I teach creativity so being surrounded by beautiful and creative things like Piazza San Marco, it can't help making you affected and more sensitive to things. When I lived in London, I lived in the centre but it was brutal, huge buildings, traffic, many people in the streets, it was completely different it makes you brutalized, it make you less sensitive because you need to be defensive, you don't need to be defensive here, I think it had opened

my ideas, and I go to all the exhibition being opened so it helps me thinking at my work. We are holding a conference here in 2021 on creativity so yes I think it helped me with my creativity.

S: so let's talk about positive and negative aspects of Venice, if you have to say 2 or 3 positive and negative aspects.

N: So first the weather, it is impossible to have this weather in London this time of the year, this is very positive, and Venice have a huge amount of culture for its size, it has probably more culture in London but I have to travel a lot to see it, here it is all here

you have the biennale, and so on. Then I think it is its lagoon and its environment, we have a boat now so we just sail around, you have to have a boat here, and it would be impossible to escape the city like that in most places.

About negative sides, well the Venetians, sometimes seems to not understand their own city, I see that this is profit, they are traders but they risk to damage their own city so really it is the Venetians attitude towards tourism, you have seen it with the re- election of Brugnaro, that you have not alternative, so I think this is a big issue.

Related to that is the economy, you see a lot of things closed, markets, shops, and who knows what is going to replace them, so I think economics has to change, the pandemic is an opportunity but there's no leadership here. A lot of people who cares but not the leadership. This is something that annoys me sometimes, I don't think Venetians realize how lucky they are. I think that's all.

S: What about people? Did you meet someone that make you discover something new? N: Yeah! In London you learn a lot of things by internet, here you learn by word of mouth, you go drink with some one and they tell you they are part of this sailing club, and then you meet some one that has a boat to sell.. and so I think actually this is something why many people don't like Venice, you have to immerse in the community, and if your Italian is not so good. You feel like they think you are stupid. I think you have be prepared to this and to meet a lot of people, so my wife is not working right here, so she is being very social, and we have more friends now that in London. I think this is what you have to do, if you don't make an effort to meet people here you're kind of stuck.

S: Now the final question, about the five senses, so tell me something that comes to your mind for each of them about Venice.

N: About vision it is the light, it is the contrast that light and dark, the light and colours here are extraordinary, the shadows, the sunset 2 days ago ...

About hearing it is the noise you have from the trolleis, it is the sound of a crowd but it is not very loud, but I think it is the sound of Venice.

S: do you think Venice is noisy as a city or not?

N: No, compared to London is like a church.

S: About the smell?

N: The canals, I don't mind the smell, but the canals are strong

S: and about taste?

N: It is sea food, like "frittura mista", I would go with traditional food like sarde in saor or baccala mantecato.

S: and about touch?

N: The stuff in the boat, like ropes and so on.. Is it good as answer?

S: Yes, Yes, there's not wrong answer.

S: Ok we are done here! Thank you for time!

N: Thank you.

5) Kent Cartwright ———————————

S: Let's start with an introduction of yourself.

K: My name is Kent I have spent my career as a professor of English in the USA. I retired over a year ago but I have been researching for a couple o f years before then. I am right now a visiting scholar at Ca Foscari University in the department of linguistics and comparative culture studies. My professional work has been in Reinassance literature, Shakespeare primarly. And I am now completing a book on Shakespeare's comedies. I have wrote much of it in Ca Foscari and so that's what I do.

S: So you have been in Venice many times, for how much time?

K: We have been in Venice a lot; it's been a little bit over four years that we have been there. We have had an apartment in Venice for about four years. We spent much of the year in Venice, altought we came back in the USA in the summer. A couple of years before we did that we had an apartment in Venice for a year to see if we liked it, and we did.

S: The first time you came here was just to look at the city, not for work?

K: Well the first time I came to Venice was 35 years ago, I was just with a friend of mine and then about 17 years ago we (my wife and I) came back just for another visit. My wife has been in architecture and she loves architecture history and she fell in love with Venice all over again. We have been visiting many cities in Europe but somehow Venice moved at the top of her list so we started coming here more and more, then my wife, when she retired from work, stayed six weeks in Venice and loved it. We started out as tourists and now we are residents.

S: Before coming here in Venice for the first time which were your expectations? Did you have a particular idea of how Venice was? And these expectations changed after your visit?

K: the very first time I came here was with a friend of mine, we were younger then, I don't think I had too much notions of Venice at all. We went to Rome and maybe also Florence; we did the typical tourist things. I didn't know much about Venice and I remember arriving here and thinking "Oh my Goodness", I didn't have a lot of images of it. You know, this was before YouTube, videos and things like that. I founded it beautiful and also confusing and I felt it was interesting. I don't think it was my favorite place in Italy at all. Venice is so unusual there is nothing like it in Italy. There is no city built on water. Then when my wife and I traveled some years after that we just did a tour and it was fun but again I don't remember having strong feelings about Venice. It never occurred to me as a place where I wanted to spend quite time.

S: what changed your mind?

K: well, to some extent I have been following my wife enthusiasm. I remember when she and I came for the visit that probably made a lot of difference; we were staying at the hotel, the Flora Hotel and there is this quality that Venice has; we will go to bed at night and then I would hear in the distance a woman singing "Ave Maria"; this really happened! This kind of haunted power. I didn't realize where it was coming from and then I realized that it was a street singer with this magnificent soprano voice. It gave me mystery and wonder. There is this haunted quality about Venice that was very

powerful. That's Venice. These things that happened ... is that ... this experiences that don't seem to be available everywhere that are vivid and striking and unusual. Everywhere you turn there is something different and you step out your door and there is colour, people, tourism, activity and streetlife. It has that, this kind of vitality but also this haunted quality.

S: I think that Venice has a kind of sensitive power for people. The senses are kind of enhanced when you stay here.

K: I think that it is absolutely right. If you are on the vaporetto on the Canale Grande and you look back and you look at the city, it seems like it is rising from the water. It is vivid, it is colourful and the light plays on the water and the sense of shadow ... the city is always moving. There are no cars in Venice! One of the most wonderful things about it! You hear different sounds in different places. The other thing here are human voices. I live in Whashington DC, I live in a big city, there is a lot of cars and people but in Venice you just hear different things. That sensory experience of Venice is just different and every place you look is stimulating. That sensory power of Venice is really important.

S: Let's talk about your routine in Venice. How did you spend your days and if it is different compared to other cities.

K: As I said I live in Washington DC, I have spent most of my career leaving here. The university of Maryland is in the suburb of Washington. That is my experience, very urban. Rituals are pretty much the same in both cities because I do research, I like to go to libraries, I spent a lot of my time in libraries. I have the University library and some others University libraries in the city and in Venice I go to libraries too. I find that I like to work in libraries. The routines are pretty much the same but one thing that I really have enjoyed in Venice is that about at 5 o'clock when I finish my works I call my wife and say "why don't you meet me for coffee and we watch people go by?". You couldn't really do that where I live now. Even walking to the library from my apartment in Venice is a pleasure, is so enjoyable for the reasons we were talking about before.

S: you think that you can take that post-working coffee in Venice because of the closeness of places here in Venice?

K: Yeah, even when I am working in the library I can just pop out If I want to! It seems so much a part of the ritual.

S: many people told me that in Venice they are actually more productive that in other cities.

K: I don't know that I am more productive in Venice but I have done a lot. It's been a good working days for me and there are a lot of museums where are I liked to go.

S: if you have to choose one thing only about to Venice, the first one that's comes to your mind.

K: It's a pedestrian city. No cars. You meet people in the streets. Even if you are there for one week you will meet someone at the end of the week. It forces you to this kind of human connections. That's the thing I like the most about Venice.

S: you think is quite easy in Venice to find a community?

K: I think it is quite possible; of course being at the university I have a lot of connections there and I also go to San Giorgio Englican church which is a community also, mostly British people. Then I go to the circolo italico-britannico. I think that leaving in Venice is quite simple. You don't expected to be, you expect it to be quite a difficult city. Sometimes getting through the tourism mob can be difficult but otherwise is an easy place to leave.

S: Do you think that Venice had in some way any influence on your work?

K: Yes. Of course a lot of the conversations I had about work were with people in Venice and being here I have done a lot more reading than before. These things have definitely finding their way in my work.

S: We were talking about the five senses before; for each one of them tell me one thing that come to your mind.

K: For vision is buildings architecture; for hearing is the sound of water; for smell is the canal; for taste is coffee and for touch I think it's the feeling of stone marble.

S: Thank you for your time!

6) Philip and Gillian ——————————————-

G-P: Good to meet you I'm Phil and I'm Gillian

S: nice to meet you.. well I don't know anything about you would you like to introduce yourself?

P: Ok well so ... Gillian introduce yourself!

G: OK I'm yes I'm Gillian and.. well so maybe we should start by saying how we came here. We have actually been here for a very long time overall, we first came in 60's, Phil in 1963 and I in 1967, and we both fell in love separately with Venice and have been coming back ever since, we had a lot of friends here that was an important aspect, we bought an apartment here as an holiday apartment in 1986 and then we moved the both of us moved from London to Italy to Ivrea in 2000 because Gillian started the research in an education Institute in your area and then in 2005 IUAV here invited us to start a course in interaction design so we then moved from Ivrea permanently to Venice and so would be there now since 2005.

P: So if I could just sort of look back about my first impressions of Venice, it was very strong, I have come with a friend to Italy when I was a student of architecture in 1963. We had spent the summer looking at Florence and Rome. So we, my friend and I, we were on our way home to go back to Cambridge at the end of summer and we decided that we would like to spend one night in Venice and I we came to finish our journey and I was so amazed by Venice that I said "look you go back I give up my work in London and I'm gonna stay here", so I spent, I don't know how many weeks but two or three weeks here absolutely astonished everyday by it, I also had no money so I lived by the milk I used to drink in the morning for breakfast and in the evening I went to the "mensa", it must have been the Ca' Foscari mensa in San Pantalon and I could there buy a bread roll an you get for free water olive oil pepper and salt, that's what I lived for several weeks and I lost a lot of weight but I did spend all my money on a big famous guide called Lorenzetti. Then I came home and I realized that I had totally fallen in love with the place that time I have to say Venice was quite poor, lots of poverty which was evident in the in the city and also the buildings were coming down I mean that the physical state of Venice was really very bad indeed it was less than 20 years after the Second World War and I think Venice had suffered very badly between the Second World War and basically the 1960s when everything got better economically but it had not reached Venice. However what I loved about the place was firstly I suppose the lack of cars, you feel it when you walk around that the city is yours you don't feel in a sort of second position which is what you get in in most towns and cities, but also the other thing which struck me very hard was that the kind of sensuous qualities of this city, you could feel that the heat off the building , the cold, you could smell shops the bread being baked to the wood being worked in in the workshops and everything which was just for me was absolutely astonishing coming from London, even coming from Cambridge that is not a metropolis. So I then went back, probably first went back when I met Gillian this is 1966/67. Gillian had friends here and as soon as we made friends with Venetians then clearly we had a very strong relationship with the place and we usually came back during our vacations and at least every year if we could, this was before RyanAir and EasyJet and everything so quite expensive but then I was lucky and I sold an app I've started with friends when I was s student and that allowed us to buy an apartment in 1986,

near campo Santo Stefano. We've always been hoping that maybe someone wanted us to work here, in 2005 it happened and it was fantastic so it was a great pleasure

G: I think the one thing that this topic reminds me of is when we were both students of Cambridge and filled it up a PhD in computer aided design for architecture. It was really just beginning at the time. The brother of a friend of us with one of the other people who started the start-up worked for Barclays Bank and they persuaded Barclays to support the growing middle tiny start-ups that were beginning to happen. There were a lot of people who wanted to work once they graduated and they didn't want to leave Cambridge. Third thing was in those days that was in the 60s the university didn't ask for any Intellectual property in what ex-students were doing in fact they allowed them to use the University facilities setting a very nice collaborative ecosystem of start-ups and people that would be getting quite successful.

P: the others thing which I think Gillian mentioned was that these start-ups were of very young people. I mean when I was a student when I started this thing, and for many people doing this, students or ex-students they were starting to have a family, create their own families but they hadn't had nothing to do in Cambridge, it was a small town just like that University and hardly anything else that's what the University said, that is: "don't worry because we will try and find work for your partners for the wives and the husbands". The University was very generous in supporting this and they were right to do so because The University owned a lot of land mostly agricultural land around Cambridge and as the start-ups became a bit more successful of course they started buying places around in the suburbs of Cambridge which then it increased the value of the Universities land and now Cambridge is one of the richest areas in the whole of Britain. It's an amazing place and it used to be a little village terribly poor very isolated and it all happened within probably 10 years.

S: So you think this could be a way for Venice also?

P: I think that is the Universities which generates young people and young people work, we know from our students in IUAV that 40% of them stay in Italy, very few of them stay in Venice the rest go abroad so 60% of our ex-students are in Germany, London, America everywhere but not in Venice because there's nothing for them to do. It is expensive to start-up here! All your money goes on renting a studio. I say in particularly if you're young and you're just beginning to have a kind of family life you need both of

you to be earning money. You can't do it otherwise so I think the Universities have an opportunity if they wanted to be much more generous about supporting their students. Another thing is that in Britain and in America the Universities stay in contact with their

alumni, they make sure that there's a good network going. My college in Cambridge keeps on inviting me back to eat there and stay there and go to conferences there and all that! IUAV instead has no connection with alumni, they have no idea of where they are, so Gillian and I have our own kind of blog with our alumni otherwise we would lose them. Students obviously are going to become successful, some going to become very powerful in 20/30 years' time. The University needs their help. If you give something now then it comes back maybe 20 years later.

G: We always thought that Cambridge and Venice are very similar in many ways and it's a nice city, people like to live here but you need a community. I don't know if you know Fabio Carrera, he is somebody who teaches at MIT, and so another University which I've now forgotten and he comes and he runs a course for the students in American and students in Venice and he's been doing it for 30 years and it's about the city. They have a dashboard, they do various research projects about the city and they've just recently got some quite substantial funding I think to look into to tourism and alternatives.

S: How do you spend your time in Venice? Is it different compared to other cities?

P: Probably not that different because in London we didn't have a very long distance to do every da. We lived in London and we taught in London at the Royal College of Art and I was at University College London and both of those we could walk or cycle or so. In a sense it was quite similar, the commute was very short being at a short distance from where you work, so for example you get up in the morning you're going to give a class in the morning and you realize that you've forgotten something important, a document you have to bring, you can run home and then run back and you could still be more or less in time, you can be much more relaxed about your relationship with work then go back and have lunch and then go back to work again!

S: Do you think you are more productive in Venice?

P: I don't think, because we are academics we were used to work a lot on our own and under our own will, if you like.

S: Because many people I interviewed told me that they were more productive here and I didn't expect it at all so I'm trying to understand why some people say that.

G: It might be to do with lack of time wasted in commuting.

P: Also there's less to do, in London you can go out every night and listen to a wonderful lecture by someone every night, or a concert, or see a film. Here you don't have much to do

so you continue your work so I think maybe that's partly to do with it, it is being in a small city not Venice itself. Venice is very strange because sometimes it feels like a small, tiny, isolated village but then these great circuses comes to town, the Biennale and the Film Festival and everything and he suddenly changes into kind of Hollywood or Barcelona.

S: It has been told many times that it seems like a little town but you can do sometimes things that you do in a big city.

P: Yes! And the other nice thing about the Venice, because it is a small town because everybody walks everywhere you were always meeting people, sometimes friends but sometimes just acquaintances in the street it is very great pleasure and I think it allows your social circle to increase if you wanted to it's kind of relaxing and comforting.

S: Yeah, so you can easily be part of a kind of community here

P: The strange thing however is that in London a lot of our community would be with the people we work with in the University, in Venice because very few teachers actually lived in Venice there was none of the kind of evening social board. In London everybody goes to a pub or a restaurant afterwards with all their colleagues. Here we have a boat and we go rowing in our boats.

G: Yes! We belong to the rowing Club

P: Yes, so that has given us social access to a much wider selection of people than we would normally have so, whereas in London I suppose most of the people we knew would probably be related to the academic world or to the art and design, here we know lawyers and postman; all kinds of people because of the rowing club. Venice is a very friendly city, we're delighted by the fact that usually everybody is very courteous even if they don't know you, in the market we get greeted they don't know our names but they know our faces!

G: Yes this after 10 Years.

P: Well yes, gradually, gradually they realize that you're not a tourist anymore!

G: And also our Italian is getting better as the years goes by.

S: If you have to choose one thing that captured your attention about Venice in all these years ...

P: Maybe is beauty, it burns your eyeballs. When we didn't live here every time we flew in as the plane came down I always thought "this time is going to be disappointing and I'm gonna realize that it's not such a great city", and then I arrive and it is fantastic; it is so beautiful every time of the day, every time of the year; is beautiful. That's partly to do with

obviously the architecture, has partly to do with a particular kind of light which is reflected of the clouds and off the water or to do with the relationship between your body and the body of other people and the streets of the buildings around you, there's a very strong psychological bond with the city.

G: A fact that I love is the fact that it's on the water, I'm a water person and when with the Rowing Club in summer we go out into the lagoon and there's nobody there and it's incredibly beautiful. I think that's another factor. In the days when Venice was absolutely full of tourists it was a way to escape the city, It changed a lot I would say in the past five years.

P: Yes maybe 20 years, every Venetians complains about tourism. They are right, it's certainly true since really cheap airlines started bringing lots of people in, who only stay a day or a couple of days. The quality of the urban life has diminished no doubt about it. On the other hand many of those phenomena are repeated in other cities elsewhere so when Venetian say "ah I remember when there were little shops at every corner and there was a lady who sold only eggs in campo Santa Margherita used to be you kind of woodwork shops and with every corner.." and you think yes! you're right! but the same applies to London! You know in London you drive to a supermarket, you drive to everywhere, it has changed, but maybe it affects Venice more because of your relationship with it, can touch everything around you; this is much more intimate relationship, when something goes you notice. Every time a flower shop goes or a book shop goes or some little guy who used to make fabrics goes you feel it more.. and you think what a pity!

S: Do you think that Venice had some influence on your work? and if you ever meet some interesting people and what changed here because of the city, in your personal work?

G: Yes well, we teach design and we met some really interesting people who were teaching part time in IUAV, and that whole community was terrific. Unfortunately with the cuts though, there were fewer people then, they were not able to hire so many part timers. As teachers, was that we had all this new money to bring in other teachers to be part of our course; a lot of them were very happy to come to Venice just because it is an extraordinary place and what we used to do is we invite people and sometimes they used to stay with us in our apartment and quite often Gillian used to cook dinner every night for them so generally they would be 2 week workshops and we'd invite two people who didn't necessarily know each, other 2 two teachers, younger teachers, and instead of having assistance teaching we use the money for these very intensive workshops; we know some very nice people very

interesting young people, we will invite them to come, they will teach for not very much money, they were guests in our home and, we thought "let's have fun with this" so that worked very well. We had people from Germany, from America, from London, anywhere else in America ...

P: the other thing I would say I think is that our impression of students at IUAV is very good indeed. They were extraordinarily, all of them are very intelligent, very well educated, competent, very competent and very kind and friendly, and very loyal to you. I think partly was because they were happy to be in Venice, studying in Venice. You can just walk from the University and going to campo Santa Margarita you can have a "Spritz" you can stand about in the evening, it was so kind of relaxed ... you did not have to get into a car or take a train or any other things which many students have to suffer in their student life. That was great it was a bit like it was for us in London as students out of home. We were able to live in University residences quite close to the centre and so for that both the students and the teachers had an evening social life together, once finish to teach you could then go and drink with your students and that made a lot of difference to the relationship between you and the students! It is more much more friendly and relax. S: Let's talk about the negative things of Venice, which difficulties you had when coming here and deciding to stay here?

P: I think most of the difficulties of coming to Venice were really to do with the difficulties which anybody has when coming to Italy, is usually having to do with bureaucracy, particularly in the 1960s or 70s until fairly recently the bureaucracy was bad, it was incredible how difficult it was to get any permission to do anything, even to pay your water bill you actually have to go to another office and you had to wait with a lot of other people competitively in order to get to the "sportello" and then you had to

bring lots of documents and coming from England we thought "this is madness". It was just insane. It has got a lot better, it's not perfect now but it's got a lot better because of the computing, just because the Internet and everything has allowed the bureaucracies to become much more remote

G: A real negative I just want to say is that it's very difficult for people to buy or rent in Venice, it is expensive and I think this is a big problem for students and also for young families.

S: Let's talk about the five senses. For each one of them if you can say to me what comes to your mind. For vision is?

G: The water, yeah and sky and clouds!

S: and for hearing?

G: "Oheh" the sounds of the gondola man when on a corner! We live near a crossroad of canals, so we hear often this sound!

P: For me it to do with the sound which is reflected off buildings. When I brought my English students to Venice, which I did sometimes, one thing we used to do is to put a blindfold on them and make them walk to see what they could pick up in their senses without any site, and one thing they said obviously was the sound; you can kind of know where you are by the reflections of the sound on the surrounding buildings! Also by the sound which is reflected off water of canals.

G: Also I remember when we first arrived in Venice a long time ago it was a remarkable thing ... was that when you, if you had went out for dinner with someone, then when you walked back home you could just hear your footsteps and it's a very weird sound, it's not indoors nor outdoor; it's a kind of intermediate type of sound. Very strange and very beautiful!

S: and the smell?

P: Oh well... bread! Bread being baked, that happens less now because there are fewer bakers on every corner but that was very strong particularly when I couldn't afford to buy it!

S: And taste?

G: "Frittelle"

S: and what about touch?

P: okay for me it will be the touch of bricks or of stone. This is surprising; it's not that my hand is actually touching them, I see it close up and I can sort of touch them with my eyes. You know what I mean?

S: You already know what it will feels like.

P: And that is because you're so close to buildings! In other cities you tend to be distant, here you feel the heat coming off the building, the cold coming off the buildings; it strikes your face and it strikes your arms ... very powerful and I know no other city that has that kind of range of sensory dimensions.

S: okay so I think we have done everything, thanks for participating! G-P: you're welcome, best of luck, bye-bye!

7) Monica Beltrametti ——————————————————

S: Hi, I'm ready. We can start maybe with a little introduction of yourself. So what do you do? Where do you live? Everything you want to tell me.

M: I recently retired, I was director of an artificial intelligence lab in France, the lab was owned by Xerox, which I did for many years. I have a background in astrophysics and then I changed professions. I was a text article astrophysics. Back then computers were never fast enough to do my simulation so I went to building computers myself. And then from there, I went to eventually research in software and especially as I said, in artificial intelligence. Now I'm retired and I live, I have the residency in Geneva but I live here a lot too. Whenever I can I spend time in Venice. So this is very brief introduction.

S: Let's go back. When was your first time you came to Venice?

M: My mother was Venetian and so as a child I lived in Rome, but we were coming here (Venice) all the time and I have come here all the time also when I was living abroad with my husband, we always come back for holidays etc. And now we have a more permanent residency here.

S: When did you decide to stay in Venice more permanently?

M: Well, it's not really permanent because I have the residency in Geneva but when I retired.

S: You know Venice very well then. Let's talk about your opinions of the city, both positive and negative in general.

M: I think you know, Venice is unique because it's a rather small city, but at the same time is culturally extremely rich and so you can enjoy all the things that Venice offers besides just looking out the window, looking anywhere you're surrounded by beauty. And then what I also very much like in Venice is the human fabric. There are a lot of associations. I was trying to count them before. It's great, they organize a lot of events where you meet Venetians but you also meet foreigners that live here and so it's really you know, fantastic to see this global network of people that are doing things in Venice and you know, having a good time and then on top of that, you know, there is the recreational things that Venice offers like going to the beach in the summer. It's now our fourth generation going to the Lido. My grandmother used to go there, my mother, myself and now my children and my grandchildren and then we have two boats. And so, you know, it's just great to be able to road this things very, very easily because the city is small, so you can can easily do these things you can reach your boat easily, etc, etc. The negative part is, at least in the last year, the acqua alta, but the MOSE

seems to be working. Very, very good news. And, you know, yes, tourism sometimes are a bother but if you know how to go around Venice, you can avoid a lot of it. Because you have to go to do things early in the morning or later in the afternoon at night, and avoid the peaks. So if you're going to go shopping, etc, you have to go, you know, at 10 and not later on, because many people come by boat from the terra ferma but what is very important is that Venice is missing on something, because it would be a great, great city, for example, to have an artificial intelligence lab. You just need computers. You need people that live in a smaller, concentrated city, because you know, the interactions also outside work ever important between researchers. It could have startups, fewer are there, but I don't see a lot of successes. So it could have ... like the Aspen Institute could have its main residency here, etc, etc. And so all these things are not being done, because, you know, the city has preferred to mark the tourists instead of marking the knowledge of people. There isn't money coming and going and not marking the knowledge that people have and making use of that knowledge to create businesses, so this is a big regret, because I think Venice could offer a lot, a lot of opportunities. So how to go about it to change it? You know, I think when I would have to come up with a business plan on how to do it, a very concrete business plan and to bootstrap it, and then make make it happen. There is an attempt to do this on the Giudecca but I mean, I think it's moving very slowly. It does not attract that kind of money. I mean, they are part of a European project. But it doesn't track take-money.

S: Okay, um, so let's talk about your daily routine in Venice. And if it is different from other cities, because you told me you lived in many other cities?

M: Many many cities. Yeah, I mean, it's just different also because I'm retired now. So, you know, I have been sitting on on a desk in front of computer for the last 30 years and so now I really want to take advantage of the open air and seeing other people other than artificial intelligence, etc. So I'm very much you know, looking to the outside and, and as I said, being part of this associations and, and going on the boat and going to the beach, and so doing all these things that I did not use to do. But this is partly also because I retired and so can I afford doing this things that I could not do before.

S: Yes, yes. And, um, do you think that your working life in Venice is kind of different compared to other places? People I interviewed, they told me that in Venice, they are more productive than you know, other cities and this is quite strange for me because I couldn't imagine it really.

M: The thing is that If you live in a very busy town where it takes you an hour to commute to your office ... now with COVID is different because of the smart work, etc. Where it you know, if you have children, you have to take them to places, etc, etc. All this is much easier in Venice. Much, much easier. And so I can very well imagine that you can be you know, you have more time to concentrate on work, because you're not preoccupied but all these other things. Yeah. So, so I certainly believe that. So I work some hours, I do work at home, in front of the computer and sitting down. I try to minimize as much as possible and I spent also time in archives to read the old document, etc. But that is all met so easy, because in 10 minutes you're at the archive. And it's a pleasure to go there. You don't have to take the car. It is much more a pleasant way of living than in busy cities.

S: If I have to ask you one thing to choose of Venice, one thing in particular that capture your attention or comes to your mind when you think of Venice, what would it be?

M: For me, it's the beauty, being here and being surrounded by the art and that for me is very, very important.

S: Okay, let's talk about your professional work in Venice. Do you think there is a network of people in Venice? or that Venice can influence people that want to come here to work positively? And there is space for them to work?

M: Absolutely, absolutely. I mean, especially in Venice, as I said, there are networks. In this associations there are very high-level professionals. They're very simple people. There's also what I like so much in associations, there's a mixture, it's a blend of all professions and of all levels in the hierarchy of management. It's a pleasure to see them all together and getting along as if they were no barriers, not that people feel superior. That's the beauty of it, I find. There are also circles like the Rotary Club, etc., where, you know, they attract more, you know, people in higher management, etc. but not only so I find this very good. And as I said, as a foreigner, you can be part of this human fabric very easily.

S: Let's talk about the negative things now. Which are the problems and negative aspects in your opinion?

M: One is to find a flat to live because since all the flats are rented to tourists, it's difficult to find a flat to rent. Now with COVID this is changing because many flats are empty and so more flats are now available for people to live longer time but I do not know how long it's going to last but certainly is an issue. And then the other difficulty is, perhaps that, I don't know because the airport in another positive thing for us is that the airport is one major hub

in the world, so you can travel everywhere. So if you're a professional that needs to travel all the time, in fact, it's very easy to do that from Venice. I believe that the difficult thing is to find a find a flat where you would like to have it and not in Mestre.

S: Let's talk about the five senses (vision, hearing, senses, hearing etc.) For each one of them please tell me the first thing that comes to your mind. For vision, for example, is ... M: Art and beauty.

S: For hearing?

M: The international, you know, so many languages. The global nature of the city. S: And for the smell?

M: Ah, well, I love the smell of salt water. I just adore it. It's good for me.

S: Taste?

M: Taste? Oh, the lovely fish. Of course.

S: And the touch?

M: Oh, gosh, touch is the most difficult. What I like to touch the Rubelli or the Bevilacqua fabrics. I love to touch these very high-quality silk etc. I love to touch it.

S: That's it. Thank you so much for your time.

8) Prosper Wanner ——————————————-

S: Ok, allora intanto grazie per il tempo che mi dedica, io mi chiamo Sara sono una studentessa magistrale di Ca' Foscari e faccio il corso di management. Per la mia tesi sto un po' cercando di intervistare diverse persone che hanno vissuto Venezia per un periodo breve o lungo che sia e che hanno deciso di dedicare un po' di tempo alla città. Sono arrivata al suo contatto tramite Massimo e quindi mi piacerebbe sapere un po' più di lei, quindi se per piacere riesce a farmi un'introduzione di chi è cosa fa.

P: Sì, io ho abitato 13 anni a Venezia e ora sono tornato da tre mesi in Francia, a Marsiglia. Ora sto facendo una tesi in antropologia all'interno di una piattaforma di viaggio che si chiama "XXX", sono socio gestore una cooperativa che si chiama "hotel du nord" nel nord della città di Marsiglia che ho creato e gestito quando ero a Venezia e poi lavoro anche per il consiglio d'Europa in una commissione che si chiama commissione faro, ho questi 3 lavori poi faccio il consulente ogni tanto per dei progetti ed è così che ho lavorato anche per il Comune di Venezia sull'arsenale.

Quando sono arrivato a Venezia stava nascendo un movimento che si chiamava 40 per Venezia, e nasceva perché i cittadini di 40 anni non si sentivano molto considerati nella politica locale. Per non essere critico come tutti gli Italiani e basta ma anche propositivo sul tema di questa città, che già allora aveva bisogno di un grande cambiamento, mi sono ritrovato sin da subito all'interno di questo piccolo gruppo che è presto divenuto grande. Ho portato all'interno il mio lavoro che facevo a Marsiglia sul tema dello sviluppo sostenibile nonché cooperativo e del diritto al patrimonio culturale. E' nato poi un gruppo che si chiamava il gruppo al diritto del patrimonio culturale e da questa l'associazione che si chiama faro Venezia. Ho lavorato anche per il Comune di Venezia sul tema della riconversione dell'arsenale. Ho lavorato per il comune più volte, erano piccoli contratti ogni volta, ma questo sull'arsenale è stato il lavoro più lungo che è durato un anno e mezzo. Poi con il cambiamento di sindaco l' ufficio Arsenale è stato chiuso e io avevo

vinto anche un concorso per lavorare per il comune ma è stato deciso che l'Arsenale non doveva essere riqualificato. Tutto ciò quando è stato eletto Brugnaro, vuol dire 5/6 anni fa, il comune aveva recuperato la proprietà dell'arsenale tramite delle associazioni, e siccome io avevo presentato un lavoro che facevo nel nord di Marsiglia che era una zona conflittuale, la direzione di questo ufficio mi ha proposto di fare lo stesso processo a Venezia perché io conoscevo il mondo associativo e avevo già collaborato con il comune un po' dalle due parti! e quindi nel mio articolo racconto un po' di questo processo e che si è fermato! Già io ho cominciato con il sindaco Orsoni che è stato arrestato poi la società è stata commissariata e ho lavorato con il commissario, poi è arrivato Brugnaro e non è voluto andare avanti.

A Venezia ho vissuto per un po', e avendo tre figli ho conosciuto anche tutto il mondo delle scuole eccetera, mia moglie invece aveva un negozio a Venezia e così abbiamo conosciuto anche questo aspetto, quello di avere un'attività commerciale a Venezia. Mi sono poi impegnato in diversi associazione per feste e sagre o per aiutare per la maratona di Venezia, ho imparato ad andare a remi e sono stato due volte socio di remiera ho fatto la voga longa e due volte maratona di Venezia.

S: E la prima volta in assoluto che sei venuto Venezia era quindi perché ti hanno chiamato dal comune per lavorare o era per altri motivi?

P: No io sono venuto da bambino la prima volta e poi con la mia compagna. Da Marsiglia c'era un treno di notte che ci permetteva di fare due giorni a Venezia, poi avevo deciso di andare via da Marsiglia e il 1 Aprile 2007 abbiamo venduto tutto, appartamento eccetera. Tra

i progetti c'era di venire in Italia, ma non Venezia siamo andati a Bologna c'era l'idea di Napoli, Palermo, Ferrara, ma Venezia era fuori dalle nostre idee, cioè era una città dove pensavamo fosse impossibile trasferirsi senza un lavoro, quindi l'dea era di venire a visitare e poi a Gennaio ci ha chiamato una che cercava qualcuno per tenere il suo gatto e non trovava nessuno e lei lasciava l'appartamento 10 giorni per chi teneva il gatto. Quindi abbiamo tenuto questo gatto e poi c'erano pubblicità dappertutto per dire che iscrizione alle scuole erano fino a Gennaio quindi abbiamo chiesto per iscrivere i miei figli, li hanno presi durante la giornata di prova e a loro è piaciuto molto, quindi abbiamo fatto quello che c'era da fare e trovato un appartamento da 40 m2 abbiamo firmato poi siamo tornati a casa e abbiamo scoperto che solo fare un trasloco Venezia richiede una barca e non è così semplice. Con l'italiano poi ecc.. l'inizio è stato un po' difficile, l'idea

iniziale era di stare per tre mesi fino all'estate e vedersi e magari visitare un po' Venezia per poi spostarsi in un'altra città. Poi con il passare del tempo abbiamo scoperto che in questa città e la vita sociale molto vivace e abbiamo deciso di stare qui un altro po'.. alla fine siamo stati per 13 anni.. è più una storia un po' così.. tutta colpa di un gatto!

S: Merito di un gatto alla fine non vi è andata poi così male!

P: Sì, poi a scuola c'era una bambina che parlava Francese che è diventata amica di nostro figlio, il padre di lei ci ha presentato questo movimento di 40 per Venezia e saputo quello che io facevo mi hai detto che mi sarebbe potuto interessare questo movimento.

S: Quindi vi siete trovati subito dentro alla comunità veneziana!

P: Diciamo che la scuola è stata fondamentale, i veneziani sono stati poi molto accoglienti per fare ad esempio i giri barca in città per invitarci a cena e la scuola è stato uno dei nodi importanti per conoscerli! Poi questo movimento dei 40 per Venezia, le attività sociali, come dicevo andavo tutte le sere a pulire i tavoli alla sagra di San Giacomo dell'Orio. Sono in questo tipo di attività sociali che ho imparato un po' l'italiano ecc..

Ecco invece tutta la parte burocratica è stata molto complessa, quella sì! Senza nessuno insomma che ti potesse un po' indirizzare su cosa fare o cosa no, gente che dice tutte le cose diverse, prima un ufficio poi un altro.. Poi noi siamo francesi la cultura è vicina e il sistema un po' lo conosciamo, non immagino per qualcuno che e di un'altra cultura, capire tutto questo sistema deve essere ancora più complesso!

S: Quando avete più o meno capito che forse poteva esserci un futuro nella città? E prima di allora le vostre aspettative su Venezia quali erano? tu mi hai detto prima che non avete considerato la città come una possibile sede per quale motivo?

P: Una delle motivazioni Era che mia moglie non voleva più stare a Marsiglia e questo soprattutto perché è una città molto incasinata con macchine dappertutto, uscire a passeggiare con i bimbi piccoli è pericoloso. Qui il rapporto con lo spazio pubblico e il fatto che i bambini possono girare da soli è stato un elemento importante! Poi un'altro elemento importante per me è stato il fatto che lavoro sullo sviluppo culturale e sostenibile e questa città è ricca di storia e cultura a riguardo, ricca di storie industriali e sociali, è stata una città comunista, è un luogo molto ricco di queste cose e questo è stato un altro elemento per decidere di stare a Venezia. Poi il fatto che sia ancora una città e che è una cultura molto forte con una sua lingua e un rapporto con la natura unico. Ho organizzato una passeggiata nel 2008 in Giudecca dove racconto questa storia industriale di Venezia, ho anche pubblicato un articolo su Marsiglia e Venezia capitale della cultura, perch hanno molti legami e punti in comune come l'importanza di queste due città come porto ad esempio, e pensa che questa passeggiata continua ancora adesso e ogni anno si fa. Questi sono stati i legami principali a Venezia e poi il fatto che i bambini si trovavano bene!

S: I punti a sfavore di Venezia?

P: I problemi di capire come funziona città con l'acqua alta e con le Barche, la merce questo diciamo. E poi anche il tema del fatto che si tratta di un'isola con una mentalità da isola! Questo è anche un motivo per il quale siamo andati via da Venezia, ha una mentalità di isola e il rapporto con lo straniero con il diverso la differenza è pessimo.. è strano perch è una città così internazionale, ma la mentalità resta quella di un'isola chiusa! a volte quando parlavo con veneziani di alcuni temi come ad esempio l'omosessualità mi sembrava di parlare con mia nonna! E questo va bene finché i figli hanno 13 o 14 anni ma poi era meglio andare via, anche alcuni veneziani concordavano con me su questo punto. Altrimenti resterebbero chiusi in questa città. Un altro elemento è il fatto che ci siano prezzi per chi è veneziano e prezzi per gli estranei, e questi ci ha fatto spesso arrabbiare anche se qui tutti lo vedono come normale. Anche se ad esempio entri in un negozio e sei veneziano hai uno sconto mentre se non lo sei no! Questa è una cosa che noi non abbiamo mai accettato, poi anche il fatto che è più italiano che veneziano di non voler pagare le tasse, di pretendere un servizio di qualità

ma al contempo far di tutto per non pagare le tasse! Anche avendo un negozio è stato difficile per noi dire sì voglio sempre fare lo scontrino.

S: Parliamo ora della tua routine a Venezia come erano le giornate come le passavi?

P: Erano sicuramente molto diverse, perché avevamo delle attività diverse. Cioè la routine era molto legata alla scuola ad esempio, prendere la barca e portare i bambini a scuola, l'ho fatto per anni, poi le spese giornaliere, qui non fai grandi spese ma le fai giornalmente, questo è il bello della città, vai in giro sempre. I rapporti sociali, ad esempio con gli altri papà a scuola dove organizzavamo la cena dei papà, cosa che continua anche adesso, continuo ad essere in contatto con loro. Questa era la routine, poi le riunioni della scuola ecc.. Poi non ci piaceva però il rapporto con la religione, i nostri figli erano gli

unici due a non fare questa lezione ed erano fuori dalla classe in quel momento, capisco che noi francesi abbiamo un rapporto diverso con la religione ma questo non va bene!

S: Per quanto riguarda il lavoro! Venezia ha avuto un qualche effetto sul tuo lavoro positivo o negativo che sia?

P: Come ti ho già detto questa città per i temi su cui lavoro io ossia patrimonio culturale e sociale, è un buon laboratorio! Per lavorare a Venezia non servono delle competenze servono dei contatti, questo l'ho visto anche altrove, a parte una persona che mi ha dato fiducia io poi non ho trovato altri lavori, non è il mio modo di cercare lavoro! E anche questo è stato un motivo per andare via da qui! Mia moglie poi con il suo negozio di giocattoli e vestiti per bambini non voleva fare cose per turisti ma era difficile, e anche per me trovare progetti interessanti e non solo su tematiche sociali.

P: Tu sei veneziana?

S: No! Vivo qui da due anni mi sono spostata qui per studiare ma mi accorgo dei problemi della città e del fatto che non offra molto ad una persona di 25 anni!

P: Sì capisco, a Venezia vedi un potenziale enorme, per quello è difficile abbandonarla, ma ogni volta che provi a fare qualcosa hai i piedi nel fango e perdi la voglia! Puoi fare le cose che non potresti fare fuori da Venezia ma poi hai tutto questo sistema di clientelismo che ti infastidisce e ti blocca.

S: Tu pensi quindi che il problema principale siano i Veneziani ed il modo in cui questi ragionano?

P: No non è solo quello, quando lavoravo all'arsenale, abbiamo messo assieme un ufficio di 100 perone e l'idea era quella di arrivare ad avere il 10% della città che fosse un luogo non

turistico. Quindi insieme a tutti i direttori di istituzioni associazioni ecc ci si è messi attorno ad un tavolo e ciò che è stato proposto alla fine è stato di fare un museo vivo per rifare il Bucintoro. Lì ho capito che a questa città il turismo ha completamente cambiato il suo immaginario. Non arriva a pensare fuori dal turismo, la città si è fermata 200 anni fa con Napoleone. Io ho lavorato sul arsenale e ho provato a cambiare l'idea dell'arsenale, cioè la sua versione di oggi è un arsenale industriale si sono fatti i sottomarini in ferro i primi idrovolanti italiani c'è la Biennale che lavora sul contemporaneo c'è il CNR che fa ricerche molto innovative, e questo anche la passeggiata che io facevo sulla storia della giudecca industriale non era per i turisti era per i veneziani per riaprire la capacità di pensare al futuro della città.. ma alla fine in 100 intorno a un tavolo si è deciso di fare un

museo! Ce ne sono 15 non è che uno viene a Venezia per un museo in più. E se non cambiano la percezione di questa città i passi dopo non è possibile farli, io ho provato così! E poi l'altra cosa è che questa è che è una città che vive di rendita. Tutti hanno un negozio o un appartamento da affittare e guadagnano più così che facendo impresa, poi gli affitti, è una follia! Praticamente lavori più per pagare il tuo affittuario che per pagare te stesso e questo non è possibile, mia moglie per pagare il suo affitto o iniziava a vendere cianfrusaglia low cost o roba per ricchi ma non puoi avere cose per gente media qui. Questo rispecchia i due immaginari che i veneziani hanno della propria città. Una volta tanta gente che veniva qui per un periodo tipo per studiare si innamorava della città e si fermava qui! Molta gente all'interno di 40 per Venezia, infatti, è gente esterna a Venezia che poi si è trasferita e che quindi non ha un rapporto di rendita con la città. Ma ora che restano solo i veneziani, non riescono ad uscire dalla mentalità della serenissima e del turismo! Sono proprio bloccati in questi scenari!

S: E adesso una domanda un po' così particolare, se dovessi scegliere una sola cosa di Venezia che in assoluto ha colpito la tua attenzione, la prima che ti viene in mente!

P: Direi la laguna, è una città in mezzo ad un parco naturale e questo cambia tutto, cambia la lingua i termini le pratiche sociali i luoghi, i mezzi di trasporto, cioè per me non è di più un elemento strategico perché è proprietà dello Stato e Che questo sulla storia di Venezia è importante perché Venezia ha sempre avuto un rapporto conflittuale con Roma e con lo stato e quindi lo stato si è tenuto l'acqua! Se tu ad esempio lavori in arsenale, i muri e tutto è proprietà tua ma l'acqua è di proprietà della marina militare! Si direi che l'elemento naturale di Venezia è il rapporto con l'acqua e la natura!

S: Quindi diresti che l'acqua è padrona della città?

P: beh sì, tutto si lega all'acqua, un elemento sociale che molto mi ha colpito è il club remiera, vengono tutti vecchi, giovani, donne perché non si va solo a remare ma si fa comunità! E tutto è dovuto all'acqua.

S: Questo rapporto con l'acqua è diventato anche molto di minaccia negli ultimi anni! Più che in passato!

P: Beh sì prima era più un rapporto di convivenza con l'acqua ora è più di lotta, perch è stato lo stato a decidere del Mose, Venezia ha anche presentato molti studi contro il Mose!

è un rapporto difficile quello con l'acqua pensiamo anche alle malattie legate all'acqua, le pesti che ci sono state, il rapporto con l'esterno!

S: Ok allora abbiamo parlato sia un po' degli aspetti positivi e un po' negativi in generale e per quanto riguarda le persone appunto questo livello comunitario, hai detto che hai comunque incontrato soggetti interessanti no?! Perché c'è questo diciamo dualismo tra persone che a Venezia la vedono crescere in maniera diversa e invece persone ormai rientrate nell'idea di turismo e basta, quindi un po' una contrapposizione diciamo molto particolare perché nella stessa città magari un veneziano vede il futuro di Venezia in due modi completamente diversi!

P: Ma sì, cioè se hai un appartamento dei tuoi genitori che mi hai messo in affitto sul mercato turistico certo che non vedi alternative! anche perché credo la pubblica amministrazione abbia ucciso tutte le alternative, tipo l'arsenale. Il fatto che l'arsenale sia vuoto oggi è perché non ci sono progetti, perché potrebbe essere un'alternativa. Il fatto che ci sia il CNR, l'università e non si cercano nemmeno alternative! Questo è assurdo. S: E come mai questo secondo te?

P: Perch c'è gente che guadagna un sacco di soldi! io ho visto tre cose sconvolgenti, una è il fatto che hanno chiuso una associazione che si chiamava il Coses che dava dei dati sul fenomeno turistico, adesso i dati che hai con 40 milioni di turisti non sono veri, 10 sono di turismo mordi e fuggi tipo quelli che vengono della regione, 10 milioni sono gli studenti, altri sono quelli che vengono a lavorare e turisti sono o 8,5 milioni. Non c'è nessuno ora che produce dati affidabili, lo faceva il Coses e lo hanno chiuso! Quindi prima cancelli i dati e crei il buio, poi chiudi le alternative tipo l'arsenale e non ci sono più alternative e alla fine finisci per rinforzare questo sentimento che il futuro di Venezia sia solo turistico. Alla fine, c'è una battaglia tra chi vuole farlo low cost e chi di lusso ma la battaglia si limita a quello,

al turismo! Eh sì questo credo sia una strategia quella di non informare, perché Brugaro ha lasciato il progetto arsenale? Perché ha qualche altro progetto! Le uniche associazioni che producono dati sul turismo sono associazioni di privati cittadini, e anche questo la dice lunga su come questa città eviti una diversa narrazione di se stessa!

S: Sì certo che insomma da quello che so fairBnb e comunque nato da un progetto privato!

P: Io ho collaborato loro, dopo una prima analisi del fenomeno airbnb è uscito un articolo sulla stampa e loro credevano che avrebbe avuto un impatto, creato scalpore isomma, ma alla fine hanno visto che qui tutti vivono di Airbnb, poi hanno cercato di cambiare leggi anche qui si sono accorti che c'erano troppe lobby forti e hanno deciso di creare una piattaforma alternativa! Chi produce dati seri su Venezia non è la pubblica amministrazione!

S: Secondo te nella tua opinione c'è appunto sempre all'interno del turismo di lusso o il turismo low cost una sorta di contrapposizioni no?

P: Venezia è diventata la città più cara al mondo e anche senza nessuna relazione tra il prezzo il servizio puoi pagare caro a Venezia e mangiare da schifo, cioè l'unica città in Italia i dove tu paghi non sei in Italia anche negli hotel etc.. e questo ha creato uno spazio enorme per i low cost ed è arrivato Airbnb. Venezia è la città dove il rendimento di un appartamento è il più alto del mondo, e c'è questa battaglia tra chi vuole tornare a questo turismo di lusso e la gente sta nei ristoranti che fa business con il low cost. ci sono 74000 letti per i turisti e solo 3000 per tutti gli altri! Cioè lavoratori, migranti, chi va all'ospedale o agli uffici della regione!

Ho provato ad organizzare gare di scherma a Venezia, perché la faceva mio figlio ed era tradizione che a turno ogni città invitasse le squadre delle altre città, ma era impossibile a Venezia perché le altre squadre avrebbero pagato troppo per stare qui! Questo per qualsiasi altra attività sociale che richieda ospitalità non turistica! Spero che il covid abbia culturalmente un impatto positivo sulla città, ma dubito!

S: Secondo te come potrebbe essere vista la possibilità per Venezia di trovare un'alternativa quello che dicevamo prima e coinvolgendo ad esempio gli smart workers quelli che lavorano fuori ufficio e vanno a lavorare dove vogliono insomma secondo te se ci fosse un progetto valido tipo riguardo all'arsenale come verrebbe visto?

P: Varie proposte sono state fatte una era di creare una metropolitana che collegasse anche l'arsenale e di creare a Venezia una sorta di silicon Valley con l'università, l'aeroporto e un'alta qualità della vita, ma questa proposta è stata molto criticata soprattutto da i veneziani. Io quando ho chiuso con l'arsenale ho fatto una ultima proposta riguardo all'arsenale che si

chiamava "Arsenà" dal nome arabo della casa fabbrica ed era sul tema di abitare lavorare a Venezia. La mia idea era di chiudere all'interno dell'arsenale 200 giovani da tutto il mondo per riflettere su questo tema! Penso che quello potrebbe diventare il futuro di Venezia partendo dai giovani, perché sulla qualità della vita, sui temi del lavoro sul futuro qua hai qualcosa da fare, puoi creare all'interno abitazione

sociali per esempio, perché i problemi e temi centrali di Venezia sono proprio questi cercare un lavoro e una casa dove stare.

S: Ok ultima domanda, è molto semplice Allora parliamo dei 5 sensi, quindi vista, udito eccetera eccetera.. e per ciascuno dei sensi voglio che tu mi dica una cosa di Venezia, la prima che ti viene in mente quindi incominciamo con la vista!

P: Il fatto che non ci sono prospettive Venezia! È una città piatta in sei sempre in un labirinto di prospettive spesso chiuse, hai poche aperture di paesaggio dalle quali magari poter guardare e capire dove ci si trova.

S: Per l'udito?

P: Tutto il rumore della laguna, i rumori della natura!

S: Cosa mi dice del gusto?

P: Beh ci sono molti gusti, è una città ricca di cultura culinaria, ma direi gli scampi crudi. Deliziosi!

S: E per quanto riguarda il tatto?

P: l'acqua senza dubbio l'acqua.

S: Infine l'odore Odore?

P: L'acqua alta direi! In negozio eravamo spesso sotto l'acqua alta, che puzza.

S: Ok abbiamo finito, grazie mille.

P: Grazie a te e buona fortuna per la tesi.

9) Natasha Yamamura ————————————————

S: Hi. Can you hear me? Can you hear me?

Natasha: Yes, I can hear you.

S: Okay. I'm ready. Okay, so thank you again, for your time.

Natasha: I'm sorry for yesterday, I was still looking home and I was like, I'm not gonna make it in time.

S: No that's okay. This guy, I'm, like, 24/24 hours in front of my computer, so it doesn't matter. That's okay. So I would like to know you a little bit better.

Natasha: Okay. So, I understand that your project is you researching people who work from home.

S: I'm kind of trying to understand why remote workers come to Venice and their experience with the city.

Natasha: Yes. Okay. And so I've run this company. Me and my friend we have this company for ... It's been eight years. It's something to do with marine transportation. Okay. So when the ship comes into port, then we look for fuel. So that's what I have being doing for 8 years. And the reason why I moved to Venice is because of my husband's job. He has a research fellowship. We were living in Belgium. There, it was a three year contract and then he got this other fellowship, and then we we moved to Venice. He had several choices to choose from different universities, but he decided to move to Venice. I just thought Italy will be a better fit for us and when we came to visit Venice, it was very beautiful. I've been a remote worker for eight years.

S: Well, that's, that's perfect for my research.

Natasha: Okay, yeah.

S: Okay, are you from Belgium?

Natasha: No, I'm actually originally from Japan ... because his [talking about his husband] job has shorter contracts, like a postdoc, for this we lived for several years in Paris when he was finishing his PhD, then moved to Hong Kong, and then moved to Belgium, and then now we're living in Venice. Every time we moved, I still kept working remotely in this company that I started working in Paris.

S: The first time ever you came to Venice was that time when you and your husband were looking for the place or you came in Venice before that?

Natasha: We already we already knew that we were going to live in Italy somewhere and it had to be within like Venice area but we had, we had a different option, like we could live in Mestre or Padova or somewhere around the area where he could commute so we looked at maybe about 30 apartments and we decided to go with the one we found in V enice.

S: Okay. Do you think that the decision was influenced by Venice itself by the historical center? or for other reasons?

Natasha: There's definitely like, it's a special place to live in. It's very beautiful and it's just like walking around the streets. It's breathtaking. And it's there was something special about the place. And then originally, I wasn't very sure because I, you know, I felt like, oh, there will be like too many tourists but I think we managed to find somewhere that will be close enough to like Sant'Elena and then also, like, it's very close to get to Lido, to the beach. So like, location wise, it was very convenient. It felt like we could do a lot more living in Venice, than outside.

S: So I would like to know about your expectations of Venice. Because worldwide, we have these kind of brand identity of Venice of this romantic city, so beautiful, and so on. So I would like to know what you expected before coming?

Natasha: I think. Like I personally live in big cities. I lived in Tokyo and London and Paris in New York. So I lived in all the big cities, but I do think Venice has us a smaller community, in a sense, like if you know, someone, then you're like, " Oh, I need to do this and that" and then you just have like a better connection with people. Yes. So. So there's that. And then it's also I think, we found interesting people working in interesting settings. There's a lot of very special events that we would have never imagined. Like I thought, we will probably have like more art and music events because we were in Venice, but it's it's like, a lot more than expected. Yes.

S: Yes. And so you didn't expect it to be part of the community so easily?

Natasha: Yes. So like, the community is a lot more. Okay. It's like tighter and it's very accessible. Yeah. And at the same time, like they just have so many things to offer. Yes. Like, the connection has like a very good chance to, to do things and to actually experience different stuff. Yeah, yeah. Okay.

S: Thank you. Talking about the routine, so your daily life. You told me you were in many big cities. How it changed compared to other cities?

Natasha: I would say the one downside for living in Venice as a remote worker is we can't really find any what maybe it's the area we're living into, but we can really find a cafe where you sit down and you can open your computer and work. Like I know, there are few cafes in Cannaregio and and also like closer to the university, the more locations but for from our area, it's like another 20 minutes walk. I feel like the culture of having a coffee here is like, you stand up and then you and you drink your coffee at the bar, and then you move on to doing something else. So if there's, there's not

much of that, you know, I take my book and sit in a cafe and I read or take my computer and I can work here. So that's, that's one thing that I miss from other bigger cities. But apart from that, I think like you find everything you need. And there's there's a lot of Wi Fi available at restaurants and cafes too. So like, I don't really see the difference, but I just think it's generally nicer in a way. Because you can like when you walk out, and it's just beautiful. And then it's also quite safe. So yeah, you don't feel very, like I'm not too worried when I'm walking around.

S: Do you feel that you are more productive in Venice compared to other cities? Natasha: It's hard to say I think I've done this long enough. So it's like, there's no, it became more automated in my heads. But I do think I'm productive outside of my work. So I met people that I could do other projects with. And now with the COVID thing, like emptying the city, I I was asking a friend of mine, who was a tour guide. And I said, What would you be interested in like making a video so we'll walk around the city. And then she could explain about the buildings, but just make a video so like, other people could watch it. And then, you know, experience the streets of today versus like, when it's all very busy. And that's like there are other projects that I'm doing, not necessarily from my work. Yes. Yeah. Other other things. So yeah, obviously, it's it's in like, I wouldn't do that in Belgium, like, we were living in Ghent.

S: Do you think that's because Venice is smaller?

Natasha: Yeah, it's, it's sort of like, more manageable in a sense, like, I it's true, like, I wouldn't have thought of doing this in Paris, because it's, it's a bit too big. And then I don't I don't know where to start. Yeah. You know, but if, if I start like from San Marco, and walk to Rialto, you know, that's a nice short walk, but you could see a lot too, or, you know, like in my head, it's just more manageable.

S: Yes. And do you think on the other end that Venice is considered just a small town or it could be considered also a big city?

Natasha: I think there's there's both of both part of it. Like it's a very well known city. Yeah. And it's big in the sense that if you do something here, people won't come. But at the same time, you could say it's more size wise and people actually living in Venice is a lot smaller than bigger cities. Yes, yes. So I think it's got both like the locality, but also like this international recognition from from other countries and other areas.

S: Let's move to positive and negative aspects, everything that comes to your mind.

Natasha: I think a positive aspect is, there's no cars. And it's really nice to take vaporetto because it's just like, more beautiful to like, see the city from the water then ... and it's nice to walk around, good exercise. And I really like the kids just running around, and it's not like, you know, it's going to be safe. And obviously, it's very beautiful, on a sunny day when you're sitting along the waters. Yeah, it's really nice. Food is good. Wine, you know, the cultural eating. So these are like, the positive aspects. I'd say the negative side is probably because we're living in Venice, you can't really find anything apart from Italian food. So like, in living in a bigger city, you normally have like different choices of Indian food, Chinese food, you know, like there's, there's not many choices, like I understand because people won't come to Venice. And then they'll go like, Oh, I want to eat Sri Lankan food, you know, because you want to eat Italian food. But I just think every restaurants, basically Italian food, and we only found a few, maybe like Chinese sushi. And that's about it. So I think that's one of my negative aspects. I, I honestly just go to Mestre to have like, different foods. Same with the supermarkets, because it's very, it's not limited, like, you can get a lot of things. But it's more expensive, and you have better choices if you go to Mestre. I don't know. And then also the cafe that I talked about, in not having a place where I could sit down and work. So I think these are like the negative.

S: Let's go back to the community. I would like to understand why you told me that it is easier to be part of a community here.

Natasha: I don't know I think it's just the nature of Italian people that like to sort of, you know, oh, you're from this country or that country you might need this help. You know, I guys, I think it's just that feeling of you need to help each other. And also, yeah, I think a lot of people we met through also foreigner, sort of foreigners kind of probably received that welcome and, you know, getting introduced to different people, and then they would feel like oh, that felt really good. So I should do that to others. So I think it's just like you, you got it from someone else and then you sort of passing it to others. And it's building like a nice environment.

S: You never found like, some I don't know, because people say that Venetians are kind of rude sometimes.

Natasha: I don't know, we lived in other places so that they rudeness everywhere, you know?

S: Okay, looks good. Okay, good. And the last question is about the five senses. So vision, hearing, smell, touch and taste. And for each one of them, I would like to know what comes to your mind.

Natasha: I think the vision is like, when you walk down to the Fondamenta and then you see the lagoon and the beautiful buildings and sort of like, that's what I see. Looking at Venice. For hearing em ... not trying to stereotype the Italians but. Every time I will open the window, I just hear like "Ciao". It's very loud! And it's a very, like, you could hear them from across long distance. It's, it's just the way they pronounce the words.

S: and for smell?

Natasha: For the smell. I say it's not the water, but it's like a humidity. It's not a smell, but you just feel the water. Yeah, it could be it could be sort of like, when you're walking around the Acqua Alta, it could be like a funky smell, but also like, it could be this fresh breeze when it's cold outside.

S: Okay. Um, taste?

Natasha: Taste. I think that's surprising. yumminess when you eat the pasta here, like it's just very surprising. It's like, Wow, I can't believe they just use basil and tomato and it's just so tasty.

S: Okay, and touch.

Natasha: I haven't really touched a lot of things outside. I think maybe like brick, because everything is built on the brick. So it's sort of like that. The bridge and yeah, so like metal.

S: Okay, well, that's all I think. Thank you so much. And I'm going to finish this thesis in one month, I think.

Natasha: Thank you. And good luck.

S: Thank you. I will need it. Okay, good evening. Thank you. Bye.

Appendix D – Venice in contrast's photographs