

THE PHYSIOGNOMY OF PALERMO CITY

DOI: 10.26341/issn.2241-4002-2020-1c-sv-7

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Abstract

This study focuses on the physiognomy of the city of Palermo, Sicily and presents the results of the survey carried out between 2020 and 2021. In particular, a brief description of the geographical, geomorphological and historical features of Palermo is presented after a comprehensive bibliographical review. The city's cultural and architectural heritage is also described, analyzing the most important historical monuments, the myths, customs and traditions of Palermo. The main figures, the capacitors and the surrounding area nearby the capital of Sicily are listed in the march. Next, the institutional framework, the economy and the projects in Palermo financed by the EU are analyzed. The final part of the study is framed by the field survey, which analyzes the statistical results through pies. The processing of the research found that the city's most positive elements are considered to be the history, its designation as Europe's 2018 cultural capital, the cathedral, the Norman Palace, local products and night life and its most negative elements such as mafia, garbage and air pollution. Consequently, the transmission of architectural heritage in the future presupposes its promotion through the creation of an appropriate strategy to contribute to the dissemination of knowledge and enjoyment, in which case the competent entities need to act and ensure a safe tourist city to visitors.

Key words: *Palermo, Sicily, Mafia, history, European Capital of Culture.*

Introduction

Palermo has a history dating back thousands of years, as evidenced by the monuments and places of historical, artistic and cultural interest. It is the fifth largest city in Italy in terms of population, it is the headquarters of the administration and a busy port on the northwest coast of the island. In the Middle Ages, Palermo was one of the leading cities in Europe, but today the city is still trying to recover. With some magnificent historic buildings, lively markets and a sunny climate, Palermo is trying to recover its reputation from mafia activity (Carreras and Moreno, 2011).

The aim of this project is to explore and discover the city of Palermo. In order to summarize the research, a systematic review of foreign language literature was carried out in the initial section. First in all, the present task is structured by the abstract, the introduction, then the main part is described, which is the geographical, geomorphological and historical elements of the city of Palermo. The city's cultural and architectural heritage is then analyzed, developing the most important historical monuments, the myths, customs and traditions of Palermo. The course mentions the most important personalities, the characteristic capacitors and the surrounding area that exists near the capital of Sicily. The institutional framework, the economy and projects financed by the EU are then analyzed of the city. This is followed by field research and statistical results regarding the physiognomy of Palermo. Finally, the positive and negative elements of the city emerged, as well as concerns about the revival of Palermo as a tourist city.

Geographical Designation of the city

Sicily is a triangular island of Italy and open to all flows that cross the Mediterranean Sea with Palermo as its capital (Carreras and Moreno, 2011). More specifically, Palermo is located on a wide plain called Conca d' Oro, on the northern coast of Western Sicily, between Catania and Trapani (Figure 1) (Carreras and Moreno, 2011), with a population of approximately 674.000 inhabitants (ISTAT, 2018).



Figure 1. The location of Palermo.

The Conca d' Oro plain is facing the Tyrrhenian Sea and is positioned parallel to the coast, having a length of about 25 km and average width 5 km. Today, the Conca d' Oro is densely populated and fully occupied by the city of Palermo in the north-western region. In addition, Palermo has eight municipalities (Cappadonia et al., 2020).

Geophysical Determination of the city

The study area focuses on the historic center of Palermo and the main residential areas that developed around it over time. Palermo is a coastal city, bordered by the Tyrrhenian sea and enclosed by a fertile plain in Conca d' Oro. The historic center is located on a rocky level at the top, overlooking the sea and isolated from two streams, Papireto and Kemonia, which they do not flow today (Cappadonia et al., 2020). In fact, it is worth noting that the Oreto River flows south through the Conca Plain with a length of about 20 km (La Mantia and Barbera, 2002) (Figure 2). In addition, north flows the Rio Lisciardone, the current Passo di Rigano canal with an area of 12 km, which ends at the port (La Mantia and Barbera, 2002).

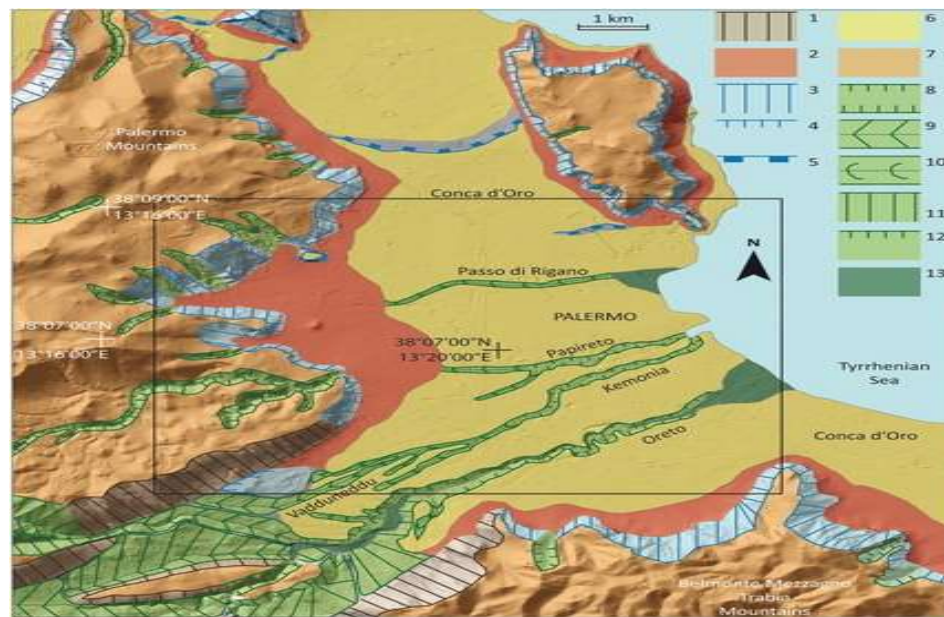


Figure 2. The rivers in Palermo.

The study area is defined by the Pellegrino and Gallo Mountains (Figure 3) (Vultaggio, Varrica and Alaimo, 2020). In particular, the mountain Pellegrino is covered by granite and reaches 500-1000 meters above the sea surface, dominating the landscape of the city (Vultaggio, Varrica and Alaimo, 2020). The Gallo Mountain is located in the north of Palermo, near the Mondello area and is covered by carbonate (Basilone and Di Maggio, 2016). Although the mountain consists of a slightly elevated peak it is marked by hundreds of meters of cliffs overlooking "Conca d' Oro" and the Tyrrhenian Sea (Basilone and Di Maggio, 2016).

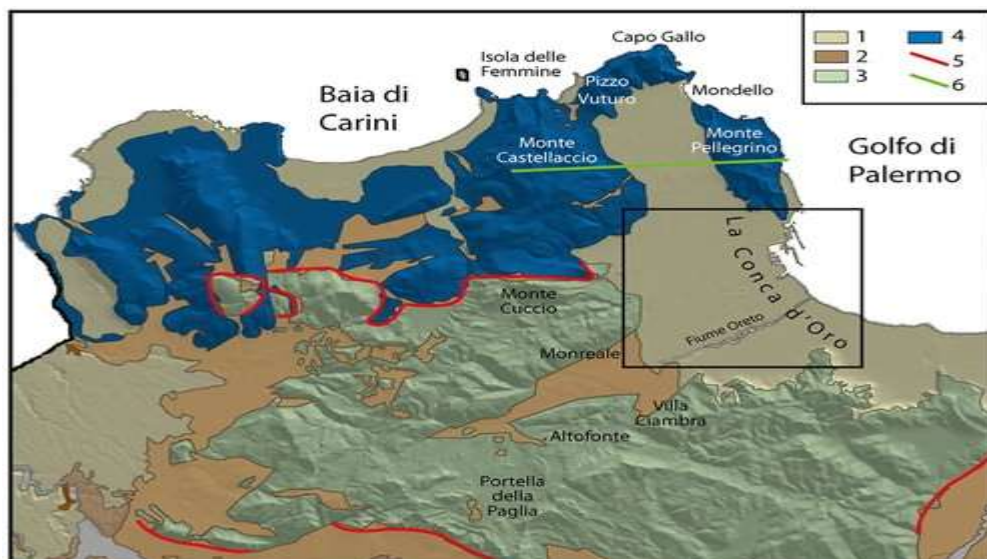


Figure 3. The mountains of Palermo.

Palermo presents the characteristics of the Mediterranean climate, where warm temperatures are displayed with warm summers and rainy autumns and winters. In particular, from January to April, as well as in the last two months of the year, the pressure is more variable and is the period with the most storms, as opposed to summer months. Moreover, all winds are blowing in Palermo, since it is not well protected by the mountains on both sides,

so it is periodically affected by frequent hot winds coming from the south-east and south-west, transporting dust from the Sahara Desert to the whole Mediterranean basin. The annual average temperature is 17 °C, with higher temperatures at 34 °C. Subsequently, fog and snow do not appear regularly and hail is not absent during the winter months. The average annual rainfall, resulting from several decades of observation, is just under 750 mm, with a maximum at winter of about 300 mm and a minimum at summer of about 30 mm. Finally, Palermo has a high humidity in winter, however, it is noticeable that its value is slightly different during the summer (Cappadonia et al., 2020).

Palermo has many trees, squares, beautiful fountains and many public gardens with rich flora, such as the Foro Umberto I, with its magnificent stroll at sea, the Piazza marina with the Garibaldi garden, the Verdi squares and the Castelnuovo, the Villa Bonanno with the royal palace and the sea in the background. In addition, citrus trees are planted in the plain, so the smell of orange and lemon blossoms floods the city. At the same time, their smell comes from the gardens of Palermo, where in the dark color of evergreen leaves, they form the landscape characteristic around the city. In addition, in Palermo there is a Botanical Garden built in 1789 and created for scientific and teaching purposes, which summarizes themes of the enlightenment of the era. The botanical garden represented as one of the most important gardens in Europe and includes numerous rare plant species (Gianniantonio et al., 2019).

Mammals such as fox, ferret, wild rabbit, mouse, pork and rat, live in natural and semi-natural environments. In fact, the fox is present in the natural areas around and inside the city. The fact that it has spread to this region shows an expansion of the species and its ability to live in Sicily. Only the 50% of rodents and insects are located on the Pellegrino mountain. However, birds have resisted more to human interventions since several factors have helped to accelerate their disappearance, including the spread cultivation of citrus trees, the usage of chemicals in agriculture, hunting and finally, the expansion of the city (La Mantia and Barbera, 2002).

Palermo has an active commercial and tourist port for passengers from Naples, Tunisia, as well as the regular stop of many cruise ships (Tramuto et al., 2011). In the Punta Raisi region, there is the Palermo airport called Palermo - Punta Raisi, and it is 35 km away from the capital of Sicily. However, due to the limited use of domestic heating units and the lack of industrial facilities in residential areas, motor vehicles contribute at least 70-75% of total emissions of air pollutants (Tramuto et al., 2011). Indeed, the recent survey by Vultaggio, Varrica and Alaimo (2020) during the quarantine period (10 March-10 April) showed that air pollution is mainly related to vehicle traffic, since it confirmed the reduction of air pollutants by half. In conclusion, over the past 2700 years the urban area of Palermo has been affected by significant man-made changes in the topographical area, the sewage network and the coast (Brandolini et al., 2019).

The history of Palermo

Sicilian Island, part of Italian territory in the Mediterranean, has been described as a military and sociopolitical enclave of great importance throughout history. For the same reason, it suffered multiple conquests and colonies. Sicily's story was stigmatized by Phoenician and Greek traders on the peninsula. Palermo's first name was Mabbonath, but that name changed when the Phoenicians formed a thriving commercial colony in the seventh century BC, and they renamed it to Ziz, which means flower, in order to reflect the beauty of the area surrounded by mountains and crossed by four rivers. However, the city's ancient name is Panormos, which was given by Greek seamen and means the entire port, which, after a few Arab amendments, became the current name. Its strategic position, mining and

agriculture resources attracted many invaders, merchants and seamen, some of whom left a fairly diverse linguistic footprint (Núñez Méndez and Chakerian, 2012).

In more detail, the oldest tribes recognized as indigenous on the island are Siculi and Sicanos (Núñez Méndez and Chakerian, 2012). These two, settled on the island about 3.000 years BC. and lived together, combining their traditions and language (Núñez Méndez and Chakerian, 2012). In the seventh century, the Phoenicians arrived and remained on the island for almost seven hundred years, until 250 BC, but they failed to prevail over the locals (Brandolini et al., 2020). In this favorable place, the Phoenicians built a large and easily defended port and founded the old city (Brandolini et al., 2020).

At the same time, the Greeks, ubiquitous merchants and sailors in the Mediterranean, shared with the Phoenicians the resources of the island from 735 BC to 254 BC, exerting an obvious influence on the culture and language of Sicily. After the Greeks, came the Romans who were left to manage the island from 254 BC to 410 AD. The Romans imposed their language and culture, however, the native speakers continued to use their local dialect and the greek language. Consequently, the island's population communicated bilingually, using latin and greek as languages (Gianniantonio et al., 2019; Núñez Méndez and Chakerian, 2012).

After the fall of the Roman Empire, he suffered heavy raids from the Vandals and the Ostrogoths to 535 AD. who left little linguistic information on the peninsula. Subsequently, the Byzantine naval fleets of Belissario, managed to conquer the city and designate it as the capital of their kingdom in southern Italy. In addition, Byzantine people brought the art of decoration to Palermo, which is characterized by marble and gold (Carreras and Moreno, 2011).

At 827 AD, the Arabs entered the island and remained until 1072, although their sovereignty was not so extensive, built mosques, large palaces surrounded by orange trees in the Kalsa area and their dictionary heritage was decisive. Other invaders, such as the Normans (1072-1198), followed by the maximum luminance period for Palermo since 1040 AD, when the Norman kings united the various cultures by creating a state of art in which different ethnic groups and religions coexist peacefully. This was the climate that entered from Frederick II and the buildings built in this fervent medieval period created the Arab-Norman architectural style (Núñez Méndez and Chakerian, 2012).

Later, the Suevi (1198-1266), the Afghan Dynasty Franks (1266-1282) appeared as occupants of the city, and finally, the Spaniards who settled on the island for more than five centuries (1282-1860). As a result, Spain's influence is constantly reflected in the cultural and linguistic profile of Sicily. The island became part of Italy in the 19th century, and since then its history has been closely linked to that of Italy and not to Spain. Since 1945 it has been the capital of Sicily, the capital has its own government and regional parliament (Núñez Méndez and Chakerian, 2012).

The culture of the city

The city of Palermo is a combination of popular traditions echoing the streets of the city. Residents boast of their superiority, which is why there is a chronic rivalry with Catania. They speak Italian, while at the same time they make use of the Sicilian dialect, as well as the dialect of Palermo, namely "Palermitano" with their own pronunciation (Celata, Meluzzi and Ricci, 2016).

The large number of small churches in any part of the city denotes the deep traditional religious and importance of the Roman Catholic Church in the daily lives of the inhabitants. Catholic religious festivals are of great importance in Sicilian folklore. Among the most representative festivals are in the city's patron, St. Rosalia, which is celebrated on July 15th each year on the anniversary of its discovery and many songs have been written about Her

(Figure 4). Her church is in a cave on Mount Pellegrino, which is to pay tribute to Rosalie, the daughter of a noble family who chose to live the life as a hermit on the mountain slope, avoiding the luxury of her life. However, she died a few years later and her remains were found by a hunter during the plague epidemic four centuries after her death. Curiously, when the bones were transferred back to the city, people began to heal miraculously, so she was declared as the prostate saint of the city of Palermo (Walendziak-Genco, 2013).



Figure 4. The religious holiday of St. Rosalia.

The city's main museums are the National Museum, with very rich archeological collections, the National Gallery of Sicily, housed in Palazzo Abatellis and the Ethnographic Museum housed in the so-called Chinese Palazzina della Favorita, the National and Municipal Library. The city also has important university, such as the University of Palermo, founded in 1805, has about 60.000 students, the Mediterranean Polytechnic, Guglielmo Marconi, TEL.MA University of Telematics Audiovisual Management and its Theological School Sicily "San Giovanni Evangelista" (Zabbia, 2017).

In addition, the "International Puppet Museum Antonio Pasqualino" is certainly a special place, which, recognized by UNESCO and includes over 3.500 puppets from all over the world. An important part of the museum is dedicated to the puppets of the traditional Sicilian Theater inspired by the times of the Knights (Pasqualino, 1978). Undoubtedly, a special monument that characterizes Palermo and chills its visitors is the Catacombs of the Cappuccino Church, where they served as a landfill from the beginning of the 17th to the end of the 19th century. Palermo's mummies are a key topic in the popular literature about morgue practices and the history of mummification. Indeed, Rosalia Lombardo is the last mummy buried in the Catacombs and mummified at the age of 2 (Figure 5) (Polzer, 2018).



Figure 5. The mummy of Rosalia Lombardo.

However, life in Palermo has been stigmatized by the Italian-American Sicilian mafia, Cosa Nostra. One of the aims of the mafia was to preserve and consolidate the basis of the local political force for which it used terrorist and repressive means. Alongside the development of the mafia organization, the fight against the mafia, which began more than a century ago, is emerging. Cosa Nostra's latest impressive crimes were the killings of Sicilian judges who were against the Italian mafia (Crowther, 2014).

A fundamental part of Sicily's tradition concerns the oral stories collected in the 19th century by Giuseppe Pitrè at the Sicilian Folklore Library (Zipes, 2009). In more detail, they range from songs, fairy tales, proverbs to linguistics (Zipes, 2009). Moreover, traditional female dress resembles those of Calabria and Sardinia, and the same can be said of the male suit, where it is considered more pronounced and characterized by wide bands (Figure 6) (Silvestrini, 1986).



Figure 6. The traditional costume of Palermo.

Undeniably, a major cultural element is found in the ceramic vessels in the shape of a head, the Moor's Heads which are one of the island's representative symbols (Figure 7). These particular objects adorn the house balconies and are often used as decorative elements in Palermo. The unique shape of the vessels comes, however, from a macabre city legend, in the year 1100 during Arab rule. A beautiful girl that lived in a district of Palermo, spent her days almost exclusively at home, dedicated to care the plants that decorated her balcony. One day, a young man saw the girl on the balcony watering her flowers and fall in love with her. Then the two young people met and there was mutual love but the girl knew that he would soon leave her to return to the East, where his wife and children were waiting for him. As a result, she could not accept the conditions and the night as he was sleeping, she decapitated him and she used his head as a pot where she planted a basil. She then placed it out on the balcony so that the man would stay with her forever and the basil grew from her tears (Di Maio, 2017).



Figure 7. The ceramic Moor's Heads.

There is no doubt that Palermo's cuisine is special, because the people lived in Palermo gave the city an inspiration for dishes filled with spices, tastes and colors. Of course, it is worth emphasizing that the city is one of the largest representatives of the street food. Therefore, local markets were born during Arab domination with the most famous to be Ballarò (Figure 8). The dishes cooked are fish, fruit and vegetables, accompanying them with a glass of wine. A traditional dish is the chardi pasta with sardines, wild fennel, raisins and pine seeds. Also, one of Sicily's culinary specialties is considered the arancini, which is yellow rice balls filled with meat sauce, butter, ham, mozzarella, peas and mushrooms (Lubberhuizen, 2017).



Figure 8. The local Ballarò market.

Admittedly, the peculiarity of Palermo lies in traditional sweets, the cannolo (Figure 9) and the buccellati, and also their origin, since monks had prepared them in the monasteries and sold them during traditional festivals. An additional flagship example is represented by the Sicilian cassata, whose origin dates back to the Arabs, where the Normans, Spaniards and Italians added their touch at its final form. Also, on the market stands there is the Martorana cake, which is almond paste biscuits and named after the Martorana monastery during the Norman period (Lubberhuizen, 2017).



Figure 9. The cannolo sweet.

The architectural heritage of the city

Palermo presents a baroque aspect, due to many churches and palaces of the 17th-18th century and contains 12 UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Initially, in the center of the city is Quattro Canti, which is a small square, surrounded by the corners of the four buildings

(Figure 10). In addition, the square is decorated with the statues of many saints, as well as the four seasons (Carreras and Moreno, 2011).



Figure 10. Piazza Villena, Quattro Canti.

More than 100 churches are counted in Palermo. In particular, the churches built by the Normans show a union of Byzantine, Arabic and Latin elements. At the city gates there is the small church of S. Giovanni dei Lebbrosi, which is probably the oldest in the Norman period, built around 1071 by Count Rugeiro. Meanwhile, another Norman church is San Giovanni dei Eremiti, built in 1132, featuring an Eastern appearance due to the five trols (Agudo and MÁ-Mandalà, 2016).

Subsequently, a large and impressive fountain by Florentines Francesco Camilliani and Michelangelo Nacherini (1576) occupies the center of Piazza Pretoria, which contains metaphorical decorations and playful herubim (Figure 11). However, notable sculptures have been missing since the 17th century but they have been replaced in the 18th century by Giacomo Serpotta, where they are admirably highlighted for their freshness and vitality (Chirco, 2020).



Figure 11. The fountain of Piazza Pretoria.

The Palace of the Normans is an ancient Arab palace that expanded under Norman rule until it became known as the Royal Palace of Palermo. (Figure 12).



Figure 12. Palace of the Normans.

There is a Roman, Byzantine, Arabic, Norman and Baroque style on the outside of the building. The inner spaces are neo-classical and decorated with mythological performances. In more detail, the Palatine Chapel has remained in the royal palace since Rugeiro II, decorated with magnificent mosaics by Byzantine workers, with performances from biblical tents, statues and apostles covered with wonderful arabic-style wooden ceiling (Figure 13). The Palatinos Chapel is a wonderful example of the union between different cultures and religions, as Byzantine, Muslim and Latino teachers worked there, the surface is almost completely covered by golden mosaics, and the arch may show the big image of the Christ Almighty (Inzerillo & Santagati, 2015).



Figure 13. Norman Palace and Palatine Chapel - Palermo.

One notable Norman's architectural creation in Sicily is the Palermo cathedral established in 1185 AD and containing additions from the 14th, 15th and subsequent centuries (Figure 14). Inside the temple are the graves of the Normans, the Swedish kings and a crypt with other Greek and Roman graves. The dome incorporates Byzantine, Roman, and Islamic culture, and more generally the temple contains elements of Arabic, Norman to neoclassical architectural styles (Inzerillo & Santagati, 2015).



Figure 14. THE Cathedral of Palermo.

The Trinità della Magione Church founded by Matteo d'Aiello dates from 1150 AD, with a royal design and since 1187 it has been the most magnificent "Church of the Vespers". The cathedral has undergone several changes over several periods (Inzerillo & Santagati, 2015).

There are many historic villas and parks, and the most notable is the magnificent Favorita, located northwest of the city. Consequently, it is striking that Castello Zisa, which is the seat of the museum of Islamic art and adorns the huge royal park. The palace maintains the entire face of an Arabic building externally, and internally there is a vast floor hall with mosaic, granite on the walls and a fountain in the center (Alberti, 2012).

Of the modern buildings, the most impressive are the Massimo and the Politeama Garibaldi theaters. The Massimo theater was designed by architect Basile, has an externally neoclassical style, incorporating elements obtained from Greek temples and ancient buildings. The facade follows the Corinthian rhythm, and it is decorated by two monumental bronze lions, while, the Politeama Garibaldi theater was designed by G. Damiani Almeida has the neo-classical style (Di Paola, 2012).

Celebrities of the city

Palermo's vibrance and beauty comes from the personification of distinguished city figures. Originally, Giovanni Falcone, born on May 20, 1939 in Palermo, was a judge and one of the largest anti-mafia fighters, which led him to death, since he died after being attacked (Figure 15). He left Palermo in March 1991 and was appointed Director-General of Criminal Matters at the Ministry of Justice in Rome in the hope that he could contribute in a different way to the fight against the mafia. However, he was killed by a bomb in Punta Raisi highway, near Capaci, upon his return from Rome (Bjarnadóttir, 2013).



Figure 15. The murderous attack of Giovanni Falcone.

Also, the football player Mario Balloteli was born in Palermo in 1989 by immigrant parents but moved to Brescia with his foster family (Figure 16). He has the nickname "Super Mario" and has competed in many football teams like Marseille, Nis, Brescia (Ruggeri, 2018).



Figure 16. Mario Balloteli.

Another figure, born in 1979 in Palermo is Giuseppa Gaetana Ferreri, who studied piano, song, guitar and is now one of Italy's leading singers (Figure 17). Some of her most famous international songs are Non Ti Scordar Mai Di Me and Novembre (Ruggeri, 2018).



Figure 17. Giuseppa Gaetana Ferreri.

Capacitors of the city

There are wonderful monuments in Palermo that deserve a trip to the capital of Sicily. The city is very attached to its theaters. The two main ones built after the unification of Italy were the Politeama Garibaldi theater and the Massimo. The Politeama Garibaldi theater is dedicated to Garibaldi and was built in a neoclassical style with a monumental entrance consisting of a triumphant arch (Figure 18). The need to renew the infrastructure was imposed by industrial technological progress (Di Paola, 2012).



Figure 18. The Politeama Garibaldi Theater.

The second one, the Massimo theater, is known by the locals as the symbol in the fight against corruption and the Mafia, and is the largest theater in Italy and the third in Europe, which, it took 33 years to design and build (Figure 19) (Di Paola, 2012). It is well described for the perfect acoustics and excellent internal design features (Di Paola, 2012). The lack of state resources, corruption and increased influences of the Mafia were blamed for the city's downgrade (Dickie, 2007). The horrific killings of the Mafia of a key component of the Italian political system and his entire family in the early 1990s, united the nation against Mafia control (Dickie, 2007). The re-opening of the theater is still a symbol of the rebirth of a city, and a constant reminder to its residents never to allow a return to those dark times (Dickie, 2007).



Figure 19. The Massimo Theater.

Incredibly, the stunning scale and beauty of the outer face was the scene used for the final scenes of "The Godfather: Part III", a film that leads us to the paths of Palermo and its mafia (Figure 20) (Dickie, 2007). In parallel, the film has connected the village of Corleone

and the distinguished black and white suit of the protagonist, which has been linked to the mafia in Palermo.



Figure 20. Screenshot of The Godfather: Part III.

Therefore, for centuries the Sicilian mafia known as Cosa Nostra has had a strong impact on its population (Bjarnadóttir, 2013). The Sicilian mafia has caused tragedies, especially in Palermo after the killings of its two judges (Dickie, 2007). However, today it appears to be almost extinct, because mafia obviously operates differently comparing twenty years ago, which acted openly and did not hesitate to murder anyone who dared to fight it (Bjarnadóttir, 2013). Undeniably, Palermo's name is closely connected to the mafia and it can be seen through the game "night in Palermo".

Consequently, Palermo's architectural heritage is one of its most characteristic capacitors. In particular, the cathedral of Palermo, the Norman Palace, the villa Zisa (Figure 21) and the fountain of Piazza Pretoria are the most typical images of a visitor's memory. Initially, the Palermo cathedral has the most impressive and confusing exterior of all the city's buildings and is part of a UNESCO World Heritage registration (Inzerillo & Santagati, 2015).



Figure 21. The Zisa Palace.

Corresponding beauty and registration at UNESCO is the Norman Palace, which is a former royal palace and now the seat of the local parliament. Consequently, Zisa Villa is a palace surrounded by gardens and a large lake, which serves as a mirror in the wonderful palace. Finally, Piazza Pretoria's fountain is compounded by a strange story, as it was originally built to be the epicenter of a Florence garden and was eventually sold in Palermo. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the fountain was seen by people as a kind of representation of the corrupt municipal council. In addition, people of Palermo, nicknamed the square "Piazza della Vergogna" (Square of Shame) due to the naked statues (Alberti, 2012).

At the same time, besides the architectural heritage, Palermo is loved by many because of its colors, perfumes and food. Palermo's beating heart is its markets, the cannolo that is the

region's most famous sweet, since its connection to the city is direct (Lubberhuizen, 2017). However, in addition to the smells and colorful images, another characteristic image for a visitor in the city is the spread of clothes on the balconies in all the narrow alleys of the city (Figure 22).



Figure 22. The laundry spread on the balconies of the inhabitants.

Then there is the Botanical Garden in the city, which contains the largest ficus tree in Europe (Figure 23). The Botanical garden is right in front of the sea, in a timeless atmosphere created by the presence of eternal trees and the aroma of ancient plants (Chirco, 2020).



Figure 23. The Botanical Garden.

Finally, the capital of Sicily is represented by the stories of the mummy Rosalie and the Moor's Heads ceramics. Each of the stories reproduces strong feelings, which lead to the thought of the city. Rosalie the two-year-old girl, who was mummified and her image remains unchanged until now, and the ceramics show us a love story through the years of the Palermo war (Chirco, 2020).

Surrounding area of the city

The surrounding area of the city of Palermo offers many ideas with the aim of discovering the island's northern and western areas. First, on the Pellegrino Mountain is the sanctuary of Saint Rosalia, where it saved the inhabitants from the plague pandemic (Figure 24). Saint Rosalia lived and died in the cave, where there is now an interesting statue carved in the rock (Walendziak-Genco, 2013).



Figure 24. The sanctuary of St. Rosalia.

In fact, there are many famous seaside resorts nearby or even on mountainous areas, such as the one in Madonie, which include well-preserved municipalities with a distinctive appearance. Among the municipalities included, is Cefalù, which is 70 km away from Palermo, the name comes from the Greek word “head”, since it was a Greek colony. The city is dominated by a monumental rock rising up to 270 meters altitude, already known in the Phoenicians as the “cape of Hercules” (Figure 25). In addition, Cefalù is considered one of Sicily's most famous tourist resorts and is visited for the beauty of its beaches (Ruggeri, 2018).



Figure 25. The Temple of Diana in Cefalù.

Of course, one of the main surrounding areas of Palermo is Montello, which has now become an integral part of the regional area north of the city and the Porticell area. Both Montello and Porticello are ancient fishing villages which have also developed over time a tourist inclination while maintaining their specific nature. Today Montello is the most modern beach in Sicily's capital, between Monte Pellegrino and Monte Gallo, and this white sand beach is bathed from a crystal-clear sea (Figure 26) (Chirco, 2020).



Figure 26. The beach at Montello.

In addition, eight kilometers away Palermo is the charming city of Monreale in a particularly provocative position on the slopes of Mount Caputo and offers an excellent view from the top of the city. The city was built around its cathedral, which is now considered one of the greatest masterpieces of Norman architecture in Sicily. According to a myth, its construction is linked to a dream of Gullielmo, in which Holy Virgin showed him his father's treasure. To please Her, he decided to build a large and luxurious temple in Her honor. The magnificent simplicity of the outside contrasts with the astonishing wealth of the interior of the cathedral, which shines with gold digits (Figure 27). Inside is the image of Christ that stands out in the arch, and the gaze seems to follow the visitor in every part of the Church (Chirco, 2020).



Figure 27. The cathedral in Monreale.

Corleone is a city and an important station in the environmental area in Palermo. Its reputation began when the name was linked to the mafia family, in the epic American film "Godfather". It is worth a visit to Corleone to understand where the mafia came from, exploring where they were living, and very often their leaders and lieutenants were hiding, such as the Bernardo Provenzano building (Dickie, 2007). Today in Corleone, an anti-mafia shop exists where, among other things, products manufactured on mafia-seized land (Dickie, 2007) are sold.

Institutional framework for the protection of the city

For fifty years, Palermo society has sought, through urban planning, to free the region from the negative impact of mafia. In more detail, a new life model has been chosen which denies any value and significance from the modern history. This devaluation has resulted in the systematic destruction of architectural, urban and local heritage, as well as the disappearance of the citrus trees cultivation. Thus, a way of life of the city that is inherently individualistic and aggressive has spread (Molinari, 2011).

However, in recent years Palermo has sought to reconnect with its surrounding area. Initially, through urban planning, it develops a representation project around the city center, which becomes its driving force. The political component takes the form of an initiative to make the city framework, as a collective experience by regrouping its heritage and history. It's about enhancing the sense of identity of residents with their city to make them realize that they share the same place of life and that they are connected to each other by the same destiny. The region was designed to satisfy each other's individual interests before becoming the instrument and support for a collective project (Molinari, 2011).

The planning process of the city of Palermo, which starts from the widespread awareness of the overrun, mainly cultural, of the PRG adopted on 28 June 1962, with the aim of rebuilding the historic center. The urban planning department had worked as the first stage of this planning process, the variant, which was intended to adapt the urban planning instrument to the urban planning legislation after 1962, and in particular to Ministerial Decree 1444/68. No. 174/92. The basic principles of the general variant are the preservation, recovery and enhancement of the historical heritage of the municipal area, the protection of the environmental heritage, landscape emergencies, natural parks and agricultural residuals, the strengthening of the port, the achievement of the minimum provision of public services and the restructuring of the suburbs through the municipalities' institutions (Galuzzi and Vitillo, 2016).

The economy of the city

The role of the regional capital of the city was in many ways dominant, representing the most remarkable attraction to the whole island, because tourism flows are important. In the inner regions of Palermo, the economy remains almost agricultural, based on cereal growing and livestock farming. Only irrigated valleys host specialized crops (citrus fruits and vegetables), while vineyards are particularly widespread (Treccani, n.d.).

At the same time, the city's economy is based on the tertiary sector and industrial activities are not significantly developed. In particular, production is in fact confined to shipyards, which have been in crisis for some time, and small and medium-sized enterprises, located in industrial areas. The port, on the other hand, is affected by the negative conditions associated with the stagnation of the urban economy and its position within the settlement. In addition, oil products, minerals, machinery and agricultural products are worth of mention for their great value. It is also worth noting passenger traffic on the transport lines connecting the

city with Genoa, Livorno, Naples, Cagliari, Tunis and the islands of Sicily. Of course, fishing is carried out intensively along the coast (Treccani, n.d.).

EU funded projects

Daily activities depend on a reliable network of land, sea and air infrastructure to operate properly in Palermo (Vinci, 2019). This is why significant EU funding is available for sustainable mobility projects, including alleviating traffic congestion in the Palermo metropolitan area (Vinci, 2019). One such significant EU funding concerns the implementation of the second phase of the project of upgrading the rail link around Palermo (2014-2020) (Casagrande, et al., 2020). It is expected to be completed in June 2023, and the work is part of a wider project to improve the whole rail hub of Palermo (Casagrande, et al., 2020).

In addition, from January 2020 to August 2020, the program “my city without borders” was implemented. In more detail, it was a solidarity project co-financed by the European Union Solidarity Corps, which was carried out by a group of young people with and without disabilities from the city of Palermo, aiming to form a society without isolation, empowering vulnerable people and responding to social concerns (Europa, 2020).

Finally, as part of the implementation of integrated actions, a program for the management and protection of cultural heritage was carried out, which took action in three programming periods and was funded by the European Union. Thus, there have been interventions to protect and enhance the cultural heritage, in strategic attractions such as unification and promotion (Armao, 2018).

Field Research

The survey was conducted from 2 December to 10 January to complete this work entitled "Palermo's physiognomy". A sample of 62 people was then collected and the questionnaire was shared electronically. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS 22. The following diagrams show the statistical results of the survey.

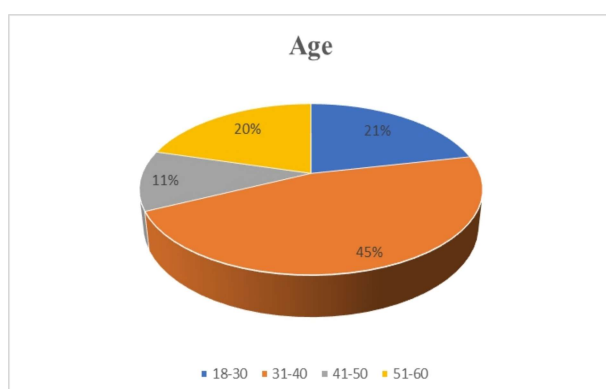


Diagram 1.

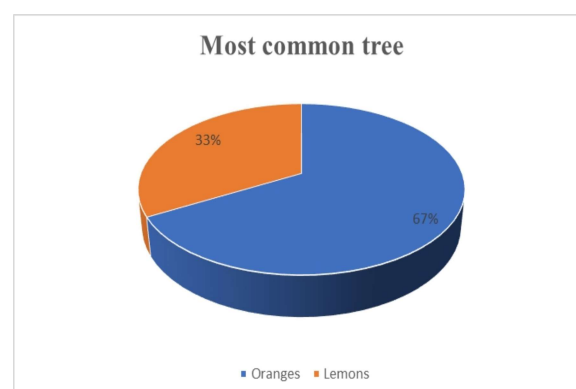


Diagram 2.

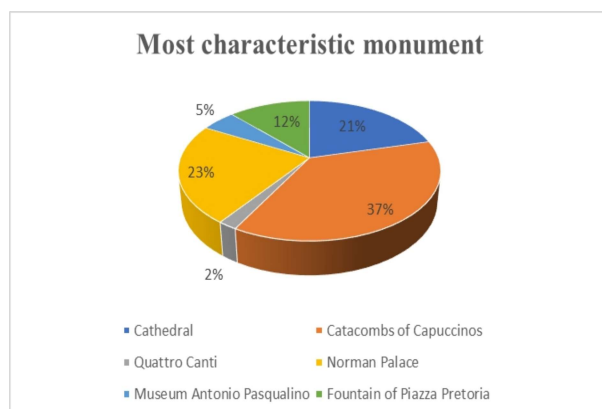


Diagram 3.

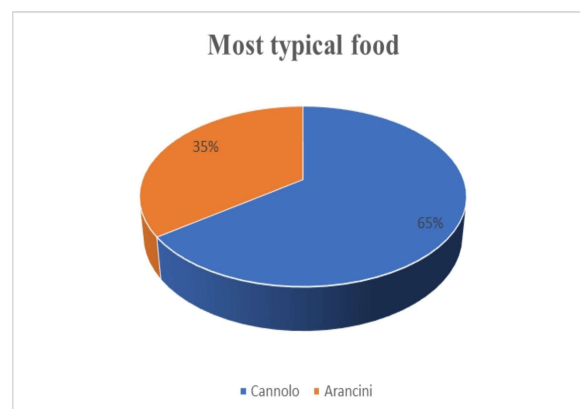


Diagram 4.

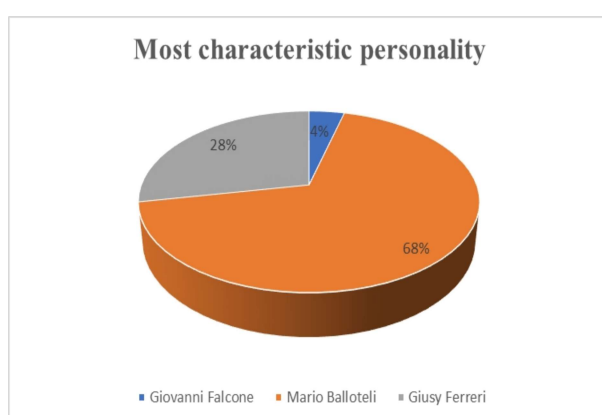


Diagram 5.

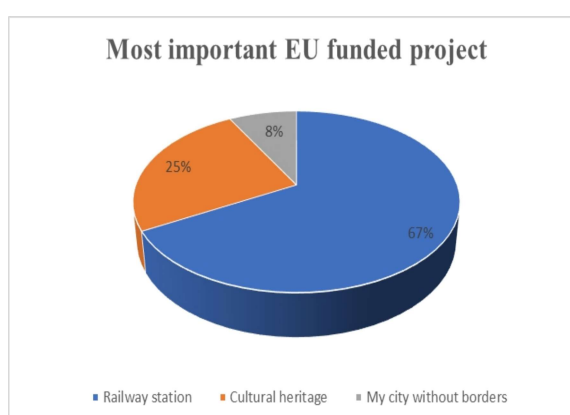


Diagram 6.

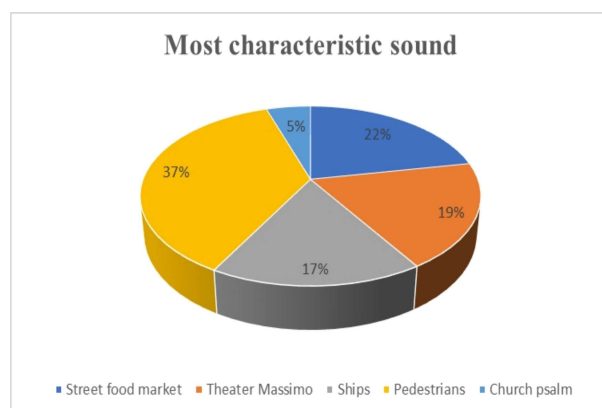


Diagram 7.

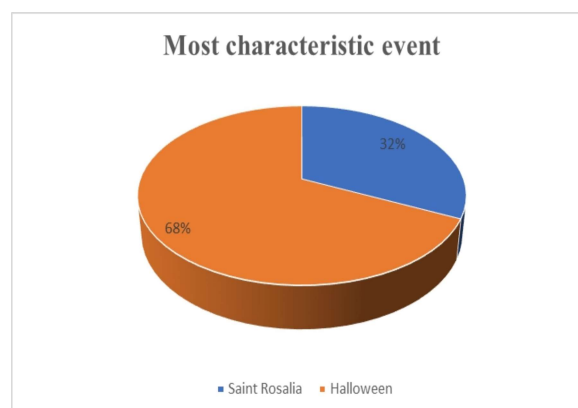


Diagram 8

Conclusions

The survey was carried out with the aim of investigating the physiology of Palermo, Sicily. The age group of participants is 21% in 18-30, 45% in 31-40, 11% in 41-50 and 20% in 51-60 years. On the basis of the sample of participants, the statistical conclusions of the investigation were obtained. Initially, participants see orange trees as the city's most typical plant, with 67%. Furthermore, as the city's most characteristic monument, they chose the catacombs of cappuccinos at a rate of 37%, which is quite different from the next option,

which is the Norman Palace with 23%. Then, the comparative question on the most characteristic food brought the cannolo into the distinct position with an overwhelming 65% relatively to arancini. Undoubtedly, the Italian voice level and especially the Palermo dialect is the most distinctive 37% sound. In addition, the question about the most typical event showed Halloween distinguished St. Rosalie's Day with 68% and the most famous figure is by 68%, Mario Balotelli. Additionally, by 67%, the participants chose the railway station as the most important funded project of the European Union. In the process there were two questions to fill in answers regarding Palermo's most positive and negative element. Regarding the positive element, the responses received were the city's history, the Palermo as Europe's 2018 cultural capital, the cathedral, the Norman palace, local products and night life. However, the respondents also agreed to the city's negative features, where they ranked the mafia first, then rubbish and last the air pollution.

In summary, Palermo is a city with a history of thousands of years, as the monuments and sites of historical, artistic and cultural interest testify, as well as being a city where it has the ability to be engraved in the traveler's memory on the basis of the aggregated results. However, in this investigation the memories of the mafia being active have been verified, resulting in travelers not visiting the city. The transmission of architectural heritage in the future requires its promotion through the creation of an appropriate strategy to contribute to the dissemination of knowledge and its enjoyment. The results of the survey should primarily concern the relevant political parties and social entities in the city, with the view to ensure a safe touristic city.

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