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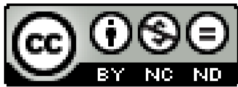

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1
Introduction

Italy is a country in south-central Europe, marked by the Alps in the north and long coastlines on the Mediterranean Sea. The population is currently around 60 million,[1] and is the second-oldest in the world after Japan, approximately 23 per cent of the population being over the age of 65.[2] The median age of the population in 2015 was 46,[3] higher than any other European country except Germany (also 46), compared with the median of 41.6 in Europe. Population density is very uneven in the country, with almost half of the population residing in the industrial north, particularly in areas such as the Po Valley. Since the 1980s population growth has flattened: people are living longer and couples rarely have more than one child because of increasing economic pressures and work and movement patterns. The birth rate is currently 1.32 children per woman, which is among the lowest in Europe.[4]

Movement and mobilities

From the nineteenth century, during the Industrial Revolution in Europe, and until the 1960s, Italy experienced mass emigration, which has led to a vast Italian diaspora worldwide. Following the Second World War, the region of Lombardy, and in particular the city of Milan, saw two main periods of mass migration that require specific consideration in forming the basis for understanding the socio-demographic make-up of Milan today. The first period saw the internal migration of people moving to the northern regions and urban centres from the countryside and other regions of Italy in search of work. This has been considered both a cause and a consequence of the post-war economic boom, or 'miracle', as it has become known.[5] Later, from the 1980s, people from abroad increasingly came to Italy in search of work and better socio-economic

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prospects: individuals and groups have come from a range of countries, predominantly parts of North Africa and southeast Europe, in the context of economic growth and relatively low immigration controls.[6] Today, there are an estimated five million foreign-born citizens in Italy, which amounts to roughly 8.3 per cent of the population.[7]

The economic crisis of 2008 led to another period of rapid population change. The following years saw 1.5 million younger Italians move abroad,[8] which has had implications for the economy and society, as well as for relationships, family communications and care – themes that are examined throughout this book. High youth unemployment rates (27.8 per cent in 2019 – the third highest in the EU after Greece and Spain)[9] and the high cost of rent contribute to many younger people in Italy today living at their parental home into their thirties.[10]

In addition to these demographic changes, Italy has a prospering telecoms market, with a smartphone penetration rate of 58 per cent,[11] one of the highest in Europe. Government investment in recent years aimed at developing the fibre broadband sector nationwide has played a significant role in growing this market, and in developing 5G services in cities across the country. Digital communications have steadily altered the socio-economic fabric of the country, affecting particularly the experience of ageing and care.

The convergence of these changes and more constitutes the backdrop to this volume about ageing with smartphones in urban Italy.

Introduction to Milan

Milan is a city in the northern region of Lombardy (see Fig. 1.1) that has long been an important industrial hub within Italy and Europe. The city currently has a population of around 1.3 million in the municipality, while the surrounding metropolitan administrative area has a population of around 3.2 million.[12] It is the second-largest city in Italy after Rome (2.8 million). Milan underwent profound socio-economic and demographic changes in the post-war period of the economic boom years, including significant population movement within Italy[13] as people came to the city from the surrounding countryside and other northern regions, and then from southern Italy, to work, before settling and begetting future generations in the city.[14]

Milan today is a very different city from the Milan that many older adults I met remember from their youth. The city is strewn with former factories, many of which have been converted into co-working hubs, art

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Figure 1.1 Map of Italy showing the location of Milan. Created by Georgiana Murariu.

galleries and educational establishments. Notably, the Milano-Bicocca university, which hosted me as a Visiting Researcher during my research in Milan, presents an impressive architectural structure, converted from the old Pirelli factory in the northeast of the city. Many older people today live by themselves or with their spouses, and many young people who left in the economic crash of 2008 are still living outside Italy and in other European cities. More than 45 per cent of households are single-person,[15] while many families are dispersed across the country and the world, and are in the business of working out how to be present and participate in each other's lives to varying degrees, in person or virtually.

The demography of Milan has undergone significant change with respect to ageing and migration patterns. Between 2003 and 2013 the total population grew by roughly 15 per cent, and although there has been a decrease in young Italian adults, this has been offset by an increase in older adults, children and citizens born abroad.[16] Today, in the city, around 260,000 citizens come from different parts of the world, making up roughly 19 per cent of the total municipal population.[17] According

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to official census figures, citizens born abroad are mostly from the Philippines, Egypt, China, Peru, Sri Lanka, Romania, Ecuador, Ukraine, Bangladesh, and other countries in the Middle East and in other parts of East and South Asia.[18]

Milan is known as one of the fashion capitals of the world and for its historical and contemporary reputations in the fields of design, architecture, food and glamour, from the iconic La Scala opera house, opened in 1778, the 1950s Pirelli Tower, which is a feature in post-war Italian neorealist cinema, and the Bosco Verticale ('vertical forest') building completed in 2014 (see Fig. 1.2), to the Milan Fashion and Design weeks and, since 2018, the annual Milan Digital Week, which reflects the city's active shift towards becoming a leading centre of digital innovation in the country.[19]

Because of a concentration of high-income groups in the city and its role in the tertiary sector (e.g. fashion, design, finance and publishing),

Figure 1.2 Photo of the Bosco Verticale in Milan, taken in 2019. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bosco_Verticale_Milano.jpg. CC-BY-SA-4.0.

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Milan is the metropolitan area with the highest average income in Italy. Despite the challenging economic climate in Italy, the city has in recent years undergone a kind of renaissance, typified by the 2015 World Expo that took place in and around the city, the second in its history.[20] The city has seen a lot of investment typified by new structures such as the Porta Nuova complex, an area of newly built skyscrapers, designer buildings, fashion houses, shopping malls, gyms and bespoke eateries in the mid-north of the city that brings capital, labour and tourism (domestic and international) to the city.

In addition to its reputation as a fashion and design capital, Milan has been widely recognised as an innovator of urban smartness and a leading 'smart city'. Since around 2010 the notion of the smart city has developed, building on earlier ideas of the digital or networked city.[21] It broadly denotes the increasing embedding of technologies into the infrastructures of cities around the globe.[22] Roberta Cocco, the Councillor for Digital Transformation and Civic Services of the municipality of Milan, proposed a specific agenda for digital development in the city comprised of four pillars: 1) digital infrastructure (including Wi-Fi, 5G and broadband), 2) digital services for citizens (regarding public administration and bureaucracy), 3) digital education (supporting digital literacy in order to access digital services and 4) digital skills (promoting these within the municipality and with cross-sector partners to boost employment and careers).[23] Cocco views Milan as a 'model of experimentation' with regard to technological urban innovation, and there is a consensus within the municipality and across the city that other Italian cities will follow suit. These developments in digital innovation in Milan will be referred to in chapters that specifically examine the presence of smartphones in daily life and digital health and care practices, in city, regional, national and transnational contexts.

Introduction to the fieldsite

My ethnographic research took place in a neighbourhood in Milan's zone 2 in the northeast of the city. The neighbourhood is or has been called 'Pasteur', 'Via Padova' and 'NoLo', reflecting particular historical periods, associations, ideas and preferences. Sometimes the terms are used interchangeably, as I will discuss later in the chapter. Zone 2 connects Milan's principal metropolitan area (zone 1) with its industrial and residential peripheral zones (see Fig. 1.3). The northeastern area of Milan contains the administrative and industrial districts 2, 8 and 9, which are known

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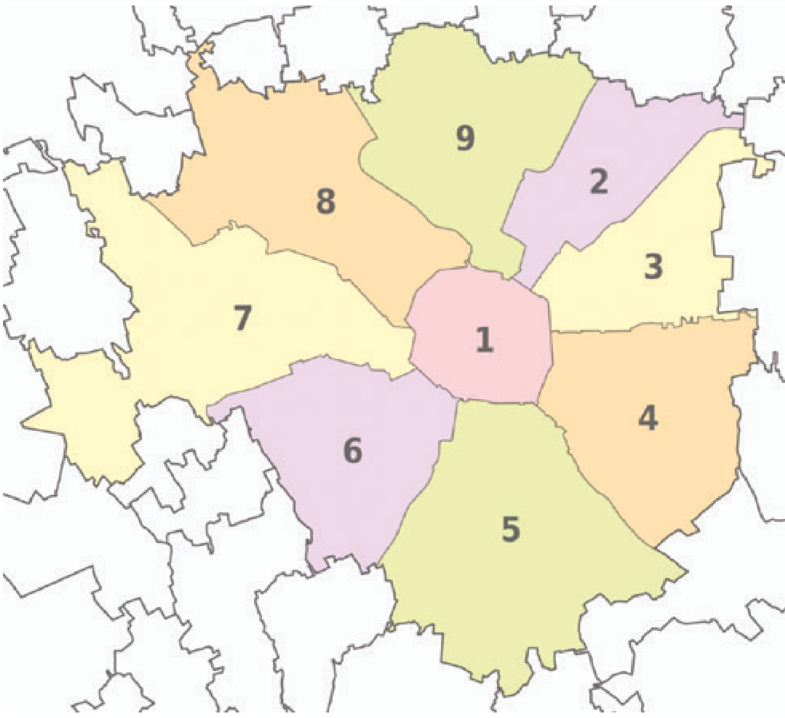

Figure 1.3 Map of Milan showing the nine municipalities. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Municipalities_of_Milan#/media/File:Milan,_administrative_divisions_-_Nmbrs_-_colored.svg. Public domain.

as *zone di decentramento* (decentralisation areas). Some of the neighbourhoods in these districts were autonomous municipalities until the early twentieth century. In the 1920s these areas were annexed by the municipality of Milan and have since been incorporated into the wider city sprawl. Zone 2 is intersected by transport lines that connect it with the city, to the suburbs and beyond. The area has a diverse urban landscape and population, having undergone dramatic development in the second half of the twentieth century, before which the northeastern districts of the city were heavily industrial. In the years after the Second World War, zone 2 became a hub for people from outside Milan who came there to work and live, first from other parts of Italy and later from abroad. Until the 1970s, zone 2 was predominantly a working-class neighbourhood,[24] with a mix of recent migrants and settled communities, including different kinds of labourers.[25] In more recent years the area has undergone slow but significant gentrification because of an increasing middle-class

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presence in an area seen as a more affordable part of the city. Following the arrival of international migrants from the 1980s and 1990s onwards, the urban fabric has evolved, becoming increasingly socially diverse. Today 30 per cent of the residents in zone 2 are from other countries, which is the highest percentage among the Milan districts, compared with an average of 16 per cent of foreign-born citizens in Milan as a whole.[26]

Piazzale Loreto is the main geographical entry point to zone 2. Once a piazza and now a roundabout, it is a major landmark and thoroughfare in the city, distinguishing the commercial and tourist centre of the city from the wider administrative districts. Although the name Loreto refers to the roundabout/piazza (see Fig. 1.4), it is also used in a wider sense to mean the surrounding areas. The piazzale itself holds historical significance, being the location where the body of the fascist dictator Mussolini was publicly hung from the roof of a petrol station on 29 April 1945, after he was captured and killed by the partisan resistance in the nearby province of Como. Today, Loreto is typified by a mix of commercial and administrative features that include looming advertising billboards and 'office space to let' signs.

The main hub of my fieldwork was the area just north of the Loreto roundabout northeast of the city centre. The neighbourhood of Pasteur/Via Padova/NoLo is where this book is principally set, and where I lived

Figure 1.4 Piazzale Loreto. Photo by Shireen Walton.

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during the research. However, wider sites across the city and country also inform the research, since I was studying not just the physical setting but also socio-economic and digital networks. I refer to the fieldsite throughout the volume as 'NoLo', reflecting the widespread use of this term by many of the people who live there, including the people who participated in the research. The area is slowly gentrifying, and has been coming to the attention of the media, academics, artists and writers,[27] youth and popular culture. Media and political discourses have represented the area in various ways, as a multi-ethnic neighbourhood, sometimes suggesting that it incorporates insecurity and urban violence, while community actors continue to challenge such representations and combat stereotypes,[28] which will be explored in chapter 3.

The neighbourhood has a range of architectural styles. At the southwestern end, nearer to Loreto and the centre of the city, there is a mixture of nineteenth-century apartment buildings, known as *palazzi*, early twentieth-century typically Italian structures in which families and older people live, the *case di ringhiera* apartment buildings with long balconies and single housing units facing an inner central courtyard that are typical of industrial, working-class Milan, and more modern buildings. Towards the northeastern end of Via Padova there are more post-war high-rise apartment blocks. Walking up Via Padova from Piazzale Loreto for a few hundred metres, one encounters banks and business buildings, with parked scooters and cars, along with numerous takeaway places, restaurants, eateries and cafés, as well as electronics shops.

The diversity seen across the neighbourhood recalls the notion of 'super-diversity' discussed by the anthropologist Steven Vertovec to highlight the 'multiplication of significant variables that affect where, how and with whom people live',[29] which includes conceiving of 'diversity' not only in terms of ethnicity.[30] The term 'hyper-diversity' has also been used in specific relation to Milan and the area of zone 2, highlighting 'not only … diversity in ethnic, demographic and socioeconomic terms, but also … the differences that exist with respect to lifestyles, attitudes and activities'.[31] Individuals have very different daily and life routines, between public and private practices and mobility patterns that might be neighbourhood-bound, and also extend across the city (and beyond) through 'multi-scalar networks'.[32]

Digital smartphone practices feed into distinctive experiences of everyday life online, as offline. In NoLo, there can be moments and spaces in which to experience or perform 'Peruvianness', for example at group hang-outs in the parks, at barbecues and at buffet lunches in the many Peruvian restaurants in the area, while developing one's relationship

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to the Italian urban context and to a range of identity markers based on diverse urban social formations and groups, such as being a 'yogi' (a person who practises and is proficient in yoga) or a horticulturalist.

Still, matters of identity loom large in Milan. Many people are depicted as – or feel themselves to be, in one way or another – outsiders or foreigners in the city or the country. Conversations between people meeting for the first time may be marked by the question 'Where are you from?' In some cases this may be the casual utterance of, say, a curious neighbour, while in other contexts the question may be positioned or received as a more political issue connected to ideas about 'Italianness' and belonging: regional identities remain strong in Milan. A host of groups and organisations across the neighbourhood demonstrate and promote respect for the co-existence of people's diverse backgrounds, in recognition of the journeys that have brought people to this place over time from across Italy and the world. One of the state primary and middle schools in the neighbourhood visibly declares this ethos with a prominently positioned painted mural adjacent to the school's main entrance that reads 'In my school no one is a foreigner' (Fig. 1.5). There is a deep historical dimension to practices and logics of foreignness and otherness within the Italian context, which concerns the history of unification, regional identities and conflicts, mobility patterns and different encounters with

Figure 1.5 Painted mural at Parco Trotter, Milan: 'In my school no one is a foreigner'. Photo by Shireen Walton.

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integration, discrimination and racism over time. Research participants across NoLo would share their experiences of these themes, which had variously shaped their lives, and so notions of identity and belonging form part of the narrative about ageing presented in this book.

The area has witnessed gentrification in recent years, and there is an increasing presence of young people, including those who through clothing and visual and material culture reflect aspects of urban cultural consumption and practice associated with the category of 'hipster'[33] and are part of the story of the urban and socio-economic transformation of the area. Several hang-out spots, such as the bars and eateries around Via Padova and the parallel roads running to the west, including nearby Viale Monza and Via Giulio e Corrado Venini, have been opened by younger people in the last few years, and these places are full of people coming to eat, drink and socialise, in line with the Italian *aperitivo* ritual, which consists of a drink and a bite to eat – sometimes closer to a full meal – usually from around 6 p.m. A number of these bars are also social spaces, hosting photography exhibitions, live music performances or theatre productions. A hub of this younger vibe is Piazza Morbegno, where, nightly, groups spread out into the street drinking beer and cocktails, and hang out after work or university (see Fig. 1.6).

Figure 1.6 Popular hang-out spots in the neighbourhood. Photo by Shireen Walton.

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Figure 1.7 Film: *Introduction to the neighbourhood fieldsite*. Available at http://bit.ly/introtonolo.

All of this makes for a multigenerational and multicultural urban setting, where diverse lives are lived in close proximity, which I reflect upon in the short film that introduces the neighbourhood fieldsite (Fig. 1.7). This setting is reflected in the multigenerational focus of the book, which seeks to highlight the distinctive experiences in individual lives, and the urban and digital domains of commonality people share by being in NoLo together, either physically or virtually.

NoLo: what's in a name?

The concept of NoLo has developed since 2016, when residents of the geographical neighbourhood came together around a Facebook group, NoLo Social District.[34] This follows the concept of the 'Social Street' in Italy, which originated in Bologna in 2013[35] and was developed among residents in a Bologna neighbourhood who created a Facebook group to promote socialising between residents of the area, to build relationships, exchange needs, share expertise and knowledge, facilitate collaboration and foster social interaction 'from virtual to real life'.[36] Because of this origin, the Social Street group, and its NoLo counterpart which followed suit, remain closed Facebook groups. Individuals have to ask to join by answering a few questions about where they live in the area, and the area itself. The Social Street has spread across Italy and the founders have established a 'how-to' guide for other city communities to follow. The model operates by sociality and word of mouth; there is no financial

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investment, only, as the central platform states, a 'willingness to interact with your neighbours'.

I arrived in NoLo in 2018, when the concept was becoming known but was still relatively new, and therefore the unfolding of this concept accompanies the story of my research. I saw how many social areas increasingly adopted the NoLo brand. Radio NoLo, for instance, is a neighbourhood radio station that has become popular across Milan. The GiraNoLo-themed neighbourhood walking tour group of the area also became established (*girare* means to take a turn or short walk), and NoLo4Kids is a community group for parents of young children that undertakes group activities and meet-ups. Annual events such as NoLo Pride are prominent points in the neighbourhood calendar, alongside the recently established NoLo fringe theatre festival and the SanNoLo music festival, playing on the national Sanremo music festival.

During my fieldwork I was able to live in and study the development of the neighbourhood amid the wider development of the city. Debates about the name of the area refer to discussion in the neighbourhood's history regarding its gentrification, and to critiques of neoliberalism directed at Milan's moves to become a leading European smart city.[37] I came to know many of NoLo's chief advocates, participants and designers, as well as other members of the population, including a small selection of older adults who preferred to call the neighbourhood Pasteur or Via Padova.

As an anthropologist, I employ the term NoLo as an ethnographic category;[38] in other words, it reflects how the term was employed by people I spent time with in the field.

Methodology: urban digital ethnography

My research was carried out within the geographical place and social spaces of the neighbourhood of NoLo described above, where I lived and carried out ethnographic research for 16 months (see Fig. 1.8). The research was conducted mostly in the Italian language, as well as in Persian when I conversed with Hazāragi-speaking members of the Hazara community in Milan. One of the central principles of long-term ethnography is participant observation, a method of social research involving immersion in the daily lives of the groups and individuals within the context one is exploring. It involved collaborative discussions with research participants and friends, concerning the themes of life, age and social and technological change. In NoLo I undertook a range of

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Figure 1.8 A street in the neighbourhood. Photo by Shireen Walton.

activities through which I came to meet and get to know people, hang out with them and experience with them the different aspects and textures of daily life in multiple settings. These activities included volunteering in the community, joining a multicultural women's centre and 'social space' as part of an NGO that carries out social activities (including a women's sewing group) and provides support for women in the area, joining a multigenerational women's choir and attending social events, such as shared dinners at the community allotments and Saturday morning community breakfasts in NoLo where people bring food and drink to share. In the diverse neighbourhood urban setting, I adapted with care to the different contexts I became involved in, in order to be in and traverse different spaces appropriately. During my time in Milan I also frequented, and supported events at, a restaurant that doubled as a cultural centre and which is located beyond NoLo, to the north of the city, learned how to cook Sicilian and Egyptian foods and sweets, was a teaching assistant in Italian language classes at a cultural NGO and lived in a diversely populated apartment block, a *casa di ringhiera*, in the fieldsite. All of this added up to a rich and immersive way of sharing time and stories with people in more intimate registers.

In addition to the 'hanging out' of ethnography, I carried out 30 in-depth semi-structured interviews with research participants in the

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neighbourhood on the themes of ageing and care, health, relationships and the life course. Most of these longer 'life story' interviews were carried out in people's homes over coffee, as well as in public places such as cafés and parks, on walks, at restaurants and in takeaway eateries. All of these interviews entailed a focus on the smartphone in the lives of people between the ages of 45 and 80, including narratives about the smartphone – how people view it and use it, and how it shapes their daily lives and practices. I also observed the smartphone as a material object, observing how people adorn it with stickers, or photographs of grandchildren stuck on with tape, how they personalise their screensavers, and engage with their photos and apps. I was curious as to why one person had arranged the placing of their apps in a colour order, while someone else did it in order of those most used, why another person did not care, and how someone else ran their business via an app and scheduled their daily life via WhatsApp. These interviews form the basis of the discussion of smartphones and apps in chapter 5, and some of them are reflected in the short films that are embedded throughout this volume.

The smartphone as object of research was directly implicated in the research methodology. It both formed an object of study (what I was exploring) and contained within it multiple site(s) of study. 'Following the thing' with the smartphone took me where I needed to go, or was drawn into through the research and through my engagement with the people I came to know, including offline in the neighbourhood and across Milan, and online to WhatsApp conversations, Google Maps, bespoke

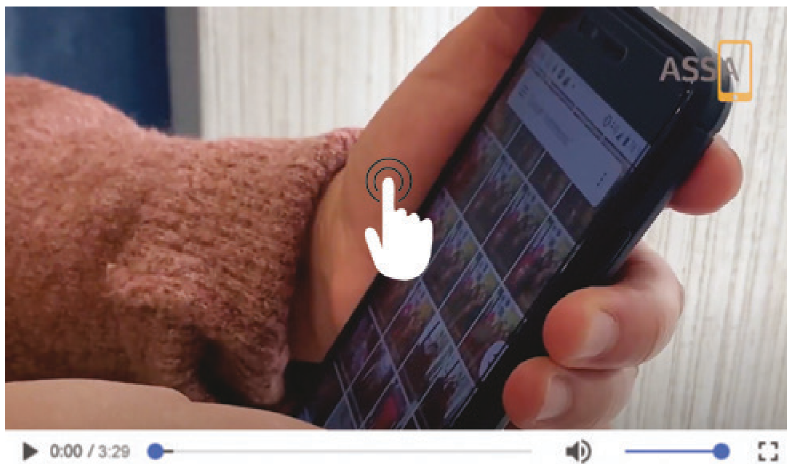

Figure 1.9 Film: *Urban Digital Ethnography*. Available at http://bit.ly/urbandigitalethno.

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apps, photo archives on smartphones and geographical locations.[39] Incidentally, spending a number of evenings in my apartment in NoLo on WhatsApp was a significant part of how I engaged with urban digital ethnography[40] – both sited in place *and* virtually augmented; I was present over many months of research (and continuing to be connected) with research participants and friends, both offline and online, in various social contexts, languages and 'affective economies' across the distributed fieldsite of NoLo.[41] In the short film above (Fig. 1.9), I discuss living in the neighbourhood, and how I carried out my research.

The approach

In this book I have aspired to a particular way of thinking and writing, just as I had aspired to a certain way of researching ageing with smartphones in NoLo. I discuss the overarching approach here, starting from the research framework of a neighbourhood or community ethnography and the scope, scales and limitations of the research. Neighbourhood ethnographies were prominent approaches in urban ethnography in the 1990s, seen in diaspora and migration studies, and in studies of multiculturalism and 'superdiversity' in particular. However, a problem of neighbourhood ethnography, similar to the one pointed out in critiques of the concept of community in anthropological studies, is its potential methodological logic,[42] in which focusing on certain groups within a specific area may imply a certain distinction or detachment of the lives, networks and experiences of individuals and groups apart from broader social contexts, namely the rest of the city, society and the world. Approaches to place as fixed in time and space have long been regarded as outmoded by anthropologists, among whom a significant scholarship highlights, for example, how places, as contexts of human experience, are, as anthropologist Christopher Tilley has put it, 'constructed in movement, memory, encounter and association' and encompass 'far more than location'.[43] Furthermore, Ayşe Çağlar and Nina Glick Schiller, writing about urban ethnographic research, emphasise a focus on 'multi-scalar' economic and social networks that traverse parts of cities, transnationally and globally.[44] Inspired by these approaches to place, space and the city, while also foregrounding the neighbourhood and its related (and wider) *digital* environments as a locus of social life and ethnographic enquiry, my research investigated the social economic and digital networks that emanated from within NoLo and also traversed spaces of the city of Milan, and which operated transnationally. Therefore, although I was physically

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based in NoLo, my research was not reducible to or contained by the geographical space, but was rooted in a number of networked social fields in motion.[45]

This book employs a concept of the social that considers how urban social life can be built through and on 'domains of commonality'[46] that are invariably witnessed both in urban spaces[47] and in digital environments, from parks, schools and apartment buildings, to social media and smartphone apps that pertain to wider offline city-based sociality, and to broader, transnational socialities. In particular, the book foregrounds the experiences of individuals and groups with whom I became connected via participant observation, offline and online, over the course of 16 months, including a number of people I came to know as friends, and neighbours, individuals, couples and families I met through volunteering activities and other forms of participation in the neighbourhood in which I lived. My approach, in entering the field, was to keep the ethnographic frame wide, in order to participate and observe, and over time to experience, explore and think collectively with people about how they experienced their daily lives, online and offline. This being so, I did not focus my research or writing on a particular social or ethnic group.[48] The aim, rather, was to carry out research with a range of people and their transnational social and digital networks, and to try to understand their particular and collective experiences, while also excavating various logics of distinction and exclusion that invariably work to classify selves and others in different ways and contexts.[49]

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, notions about Italians (*Italiani*) and foreigners (*stranieri*) are widespread in Italy, in discourses ranging from political and policy narratives to daily chit-chat, and accordingly the construction and employment of categories of persons, and within and between different age groups, became a core component in the research and writing of this book, as it relates also to intergenerational relationships and narratives of ageing and socio-cultural change and continuity. A person from another region of Italy can feel, or be regarded as, a kind of outsider to Milan, while someone from a rural context might be discriminated against by urban dwellers, as was often seen in the post-war period. At other times, people from distinct regions might be viewed as, or self-identify as, *Italiani*, in contradistinction to migrants and citizens born in different countries, or they may feel a shared but differentiated foreignness based on being outsiders to Milan.[50] Encountering these moveable identity distinctions during fieldwork in Italy pointed me towards the frameworks, histories and exclusionary logics by which

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identity categories are constructed over time and in the present, including ethnonationalist notions of 'Italianness' as white European.

The examples and case studies that are positioned throughout the book aim to reflect, on the one hand, the diversity of the experiences of the people I conducted research with and among in Milan, and, on the other, their shared concerns, experiences and practices. Such occurrences range from the experiences of displacement and ruptures in life that accompany different biographical journeys involving movements and migration, to various instances of feeling social and cultural disjuncture in Milan, and to how one can feel intimacy and distance at once through the smartphone and its geolocative and emotion-locative capacities, to how sociality – however desired, shared and enjoyed – does not erase the needs, desires and hopes of individuals. Accordingly, these are some of the main themes of this book.

The people

The people you will meet in this book are friends and people I was fortunate to spend time with, get to know and share stories with in Milan and online. They are from a broad range of backgrounds and socio-economic contexts from across Italy, including Sicily and Apulia in the south, and from countries including Egypt, Peru, the Philippines and Afghanistan. People who had moved to Italy from abroad had done so at various points in their lives and under different circumstances, which are discussed throughout the book in relation to individual case studies and biographical journeys. The majority of the research participants had been living in Italy/Milan for approximately ten years and had acquired residency or citizenship. The age range in my study was generally between 40 and 85, while chapter 7 specifically looks at the experiences of younger people, including the so-called 'second generation' of young people in their twenties and Hazara research participants from Afghanistan in their thirties. The names of the research participants are pseudonyms, and some details have been changed or omitted for the purposes of anonymity. The Hazara film-maker, journalist and poets whose works are discussed in chapter 7 are referred to by their real names in relation to these works.

Understanding people's experiences of and discussions about age and ageing, whether as younger adults, approaching midlife or in older age, involved an emphasis on biography and narrative; this is reflected in the book as a whole and culminates in the penultimate chapter (chapter 8), which is subtitled 'Narratives of ageing'. What connects a

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number of the people featured in the book, at different stages in their life, is that, first, they now live in Milan, and, secondly, most of them demonstrate preoccupations with care, time, social relationships and economic circumstances. All shared experiences of navigating questions of 'belonging' in different ways throughout their lives, all described a number of ethical dilemmas in life that they had sought to work through via various means, and all used smartphones regularly in their daily lives. Research participants generally aspired towards personal development and a better future for subsequent generations, and these aspirations were met with uncertainties of multiple kinds and scales. In NoLo, as we shall see throughout the book, the smartphone accompanies people in their daily lives, through larger periods of rupture and uncertainty throughout life and amid the uncertainty and moral anxieties of the age, and concerning the future, in which, as some pointed out more than others, digital technologies and smartphones are deeply implicated as the age of surveillance capitalism unfolds.[51]

The ultimate aim of this volume about ageing with smartphones in contemporary urban Italy – in line with the Anthropology of Smartphones and Smart Ageing research project as a whole – is to illustrate the humanity of people amid technological change, as well as the technologies, infrastructures and practices that are involved in personal and social transformations in ageing, as the digital age unfolds.

Notes

1. Tuttitalia 2020b.
2. Tuttitalia 2020c.
3. See Hall et al. 2019, 29.
4. Johnson 2020.
5. Foot 2008.
6. There are exceptions to the changing socio-demographics of the city that fall outside these general timeframes of immigration patterns to Italy, such as the Chinese communities in Milan present since the 1930s, the Somalian refugees of the early 1970s and the growth of Milan's Jewish community. See Foot 2001, 39.
7. Such official census figures exclude undocumented migrants and refugees.
8. See Romei 2017.
9. See Eurostat 2019a.
10. See Eurostat 2017b.
11. Sources from 2018 global statistical reports on smartphone usage: Newzoo 2017; Statista Research Department 2016; Poushter 2016.
12. Comune di Milano 2018.
13. Foot 1997, 185.
14. On the social history of Milan in the post-war period see Foot 2001 and Foot 1997.
15. Barberis et al. 2017, 27.
16. Barberis et al. 2017, 27.
17. Tuttitalia 2020a.
18. Tuttitalia 2020a.

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19. The inauguration of Milan Digital Week concept coincided with my fieldwork in 2018–19. See Milano Digital Week 2020.
20. The Milan International world fair, *L'Esposizione Internazionale del Sempione*, was held in 1906.
21. Datta 2019.
22. Academic literature on the smart city from the social sciences that has emerged over the last decade is prevalent in the fields of urban and human geography. See for instance the work of Ayona Datta on smart cities and digital urban transformations in India, and Gillian Rose on smart cities and the (visual-digital) production of knowledge. The smart-city concept can best be understood as a constellation of features and potentials made up of big data, algorithmic governance and automated urban management, as well as citizens' active engagements with technologies. Critical social science scholarship has argued that the smart city represents a 'techno-utopian fantasy' (Datta 2019), bringing together two neoliberal urban visions: that ICTs will drive economic growth and urban prosperity, and that they can make urban governance more efficient and equitable. Broader research has highlighted the acute contradictions within smart urbanism, including its very different expressions across the global North and South and digital divides (Luque-Ayala and Marvin 2015).
23. See a transcript of an interview with Roberta Cocco at Morning Future 2019.
24. Agustoni and Alietti 2014.
25. Agustoni and Alietti 2014.
26. Barberis et al. 2017.
27. In her novel, *Milano, fin qui tutto bene* ('Milan, so far so good'), the Indian-Italian writer Gabriella Kuruvilla (2012) describes daily life in Via Padova. Kuruvilla paints a picture of the area in an ethnographically rich manner, detailing the lives of the people she knew and spent time with.
28. Verga 2016.
29. Vertovec 2007, 1025.
30. Among the variables that affect where, how and with whom people live that Steven Vertovec highlights are 'differential legal statuses and their concomitant conditions, divergent labour market experiences, discrete configurations of gender and age, patterns of spatial distribution, and mixed local area responses by service providers and residents. The dynamic interaction of these variables is what is meant by "super-diversity"' (Vertovec 2007, 1025). See also Vertovec 2016.
31. Barberis et al. 2017, 12.
32. 'Multi-scalar' as used here is a methodological perspective drawn from contemporary urban anthropological scholarship that highlights the move beyond fixed notions of urban communities, and ethnic categories as units of study and analysis, to examining the complex, plural, heterogeneous, multidirectional relations and ties between groups in an urban environment. See Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2015.
33. The concept of 'hipster' is defined in a range of ways in different contexts, including in sociology and studies of contemporary urban subcultures. In an article discussing this topic, Janna Michael has suggested: 'The hipster can be seen as the ideal type of a trendy person: he or she is on top of current trends, owning vintage items before their remake appears in mainstream clothing chains, inhabiting the trendiest areas of urban centres' (2015, 164). Elements that have popularly come to characterise the hipster subculture may include the wearing of vintage or non-mainstream clothes, full beards, stylised moustaches and vintage make-up (Maly and Varis 2016). Lorenzo Caglioni (2020), on the basis of ethnographic research in London and Milan, defines the hipster subculture in terms of commitment to certain ethical values and practices, such as engaging with sustainable materials and produce (including clothing and food). This engagement, and the sustainable materials and produce, reflect this generation's experience of cultural and material crisis. Caglioni writes about a 'crisis generation' of people born in the 1980s and the 1990s, for whom the hipster can be seen as embodying economic, social, political and cultural change.
34. For more discussion on the founding of the NoLo Social District Facebook group see, for example, Di lorio 2020.
35. See Social Street 2020.
36. 'Residents of Fondazza Street' Facebook page.
37. During my fieldwork, I witnessed a number of resistance practices such as protests, banners, graffiti and gatherings among groups, including students in their twenties and thirties,

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protesting against the neoliberalisation of the city of Milan. These resistance practices contested Milan's budding reputation as a smart city and a centre of the Italian gig economy.

38. This 'in-field' or 'in-*voce*' approach represents what is known in anthropology as the emic perspective. The distinction between the emic and the etic perspectives is that the former presents the voices of research participants in 'the field', and the latter the anthropologist's voice or analysis.
39. Here, the smartphone represents a methodological insight for contemporary (digital) anthropology. As an object of material culture that one attends to, follows, stays with, listens to, the smartphone represents what I have elsewhere called a 'place-object', an object – either a technology such as a smartphone, or a digital photograph – that takes the researcher where they need to go for research. The object puts the researcher into a 'place' (a place-object) for social research. This can be a spectrum of spaces, physical, social or digital. See Walton 2020.
40. Urban digital ethnography, or 'digital urban ethnography' (Lane 2019), builds on scholarship that highlights the interrelatedness of urban life and digital media and communications. See for example Georgiou 2013.
41. 'Affective economies' is a term used by Sara Ahmed to describe how emotions do things, such as align individuals with communities – or bodily space with social space – through the very intensity of their attachments. See Ahmed 2004a.
42. See Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018, 136 on the potential theoretical and methodological problems associated with neighbourhood research.
43. Tilley 1994, 15.
44. For more information on multi-scalar urban ethnographic research, see Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018.
45. Levitt and Schiller 2004.
46. Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018, 128.
47. See Pink 2012.
48. During the course of my ethnography I also worked along more collective lines in various group contexts within, for example, Egyptian, Sicilian and Hazara communities, which is also reflected in the book.
49. My research approach has been inspired by ideas about moving 'beyond methodological nationalism' (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002; Amelina, Negiz, Faist and Glick Schiller 2012) and 'methodological de-nationalism' (Anderson 2019) in contemporary urban and transnational research. These approaches in cross-border studies query the citizen/migrant distinction and the predetermined construction of 'others' seen in national frameworks.
50. For further discussion concerning themes and issues in contemporary Mediterranean anthropology see Ben-Yehoyada, Cabot et al. 2020.
51. See Zuboff 2019.

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