

Research Plan

TICKING CLOCKS OF APPROPRIATION

Undomesticated patterns of territorialisation

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Word Count: 2680



Figure 1.

Figure 2.

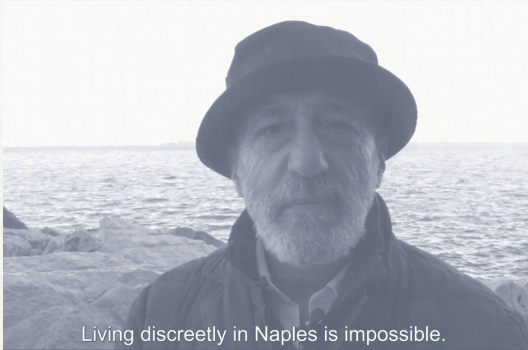


Figure 6.



Figure 3.



Figure 7.



Figure 4.

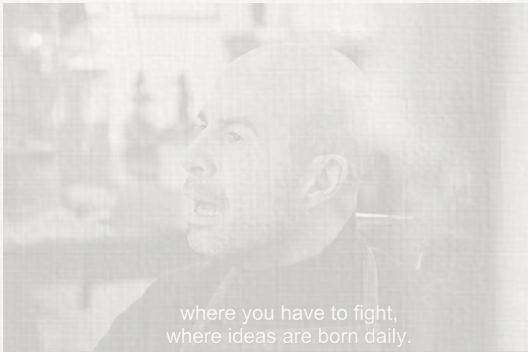


Figure 8.



Figure 5.



Figure 9.



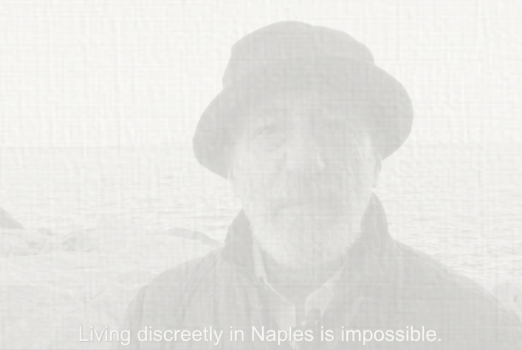


Figure 2.

Living discreetly in Naples is impossible.

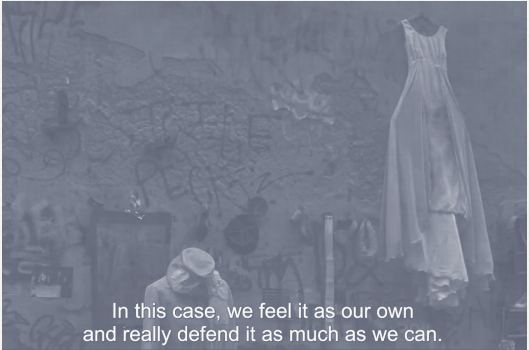


Figure 6.

In this case, we feel it as our own
and really defend it as much as we can.

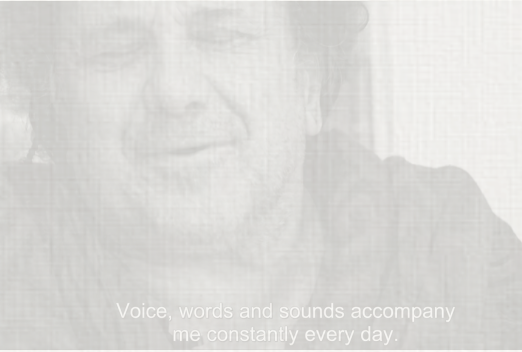


Figure 3.

Voice, words and sounds accompany
me constantly every day.



Figure 7.

We live in an abandoned state.

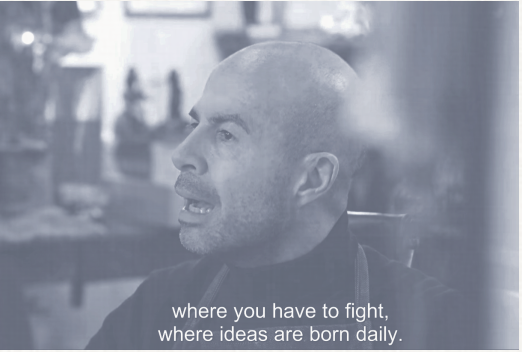


Figure 4.

where you have to fight,
where ideas are born daily.

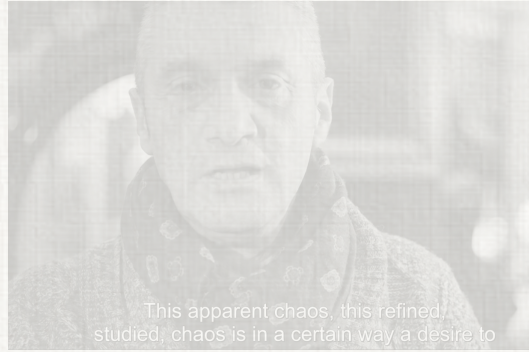


Figure 8.

This apparent chaos, this refined,
studied, chaos is in a certain way a desire to

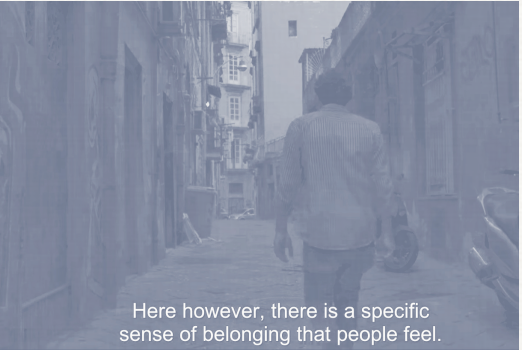


Figure 5.

Here however, there is a specific
sense of belonging that people feel.



Figure 9.

Naples is complexed,

Problem Statement

Modern thinking often identifies society according to the term of *standard*, a shared framework that governs collective codes of conduct (Portanova, 2021, p.63). These standards can be understood as *institutions*, or organised systems of behaviour designed to ensure consistency and homogeneity across social collectives (Deleuze, 2004, p.19). Historically, institutions were rooted in local customs and developed by communities to address their specific social and practical needs. However, with the rise of *syncolonialism*, a process marked by the synchronisation of global time and standards through the mechanism of the clock, these once-localised institutions have become increasingly systematised (Portanova, 2021, p.56).

Today’s institutions are predominantly driven top-down by speed and efficiency, often leaving individuals feeling disconnected and unable to navigate them. This widespread uniformity in laws and life rhythms has created a clear divide between those who conform to these standards and those who resist, often leaving the latter behind (Portanova, 2021, p.17). In Italy, particularly in Naples, where citizens have long rejected the imposition of Western conventions in favour of tradition, this has led to an overall external perception of *backwardness* and an insurgent phenomenon of *rebellious temporality*, a deliberate rejection of standardised rhythms of modern life (Agnew, 1997, p.37-38).

These asynchronous Neapolitan temporalities are most evident in the streets, functioning not only as corridors of movement but as *technologies of time*. In Naples, streets are in fact more than transportation routes; they serve as extensions of the home, social hubs, and sites of cultural expression. It is common to see drying racks hanging in the open air, families dining in the middle of the street, or children playing football against house doors. These unconventional uses of streets represent a form of *temporary appropriation*, where individuals assert their own sense of time and ownership in defiance of universal temporal and spatial norms.

However, these self-regulated urban dynamics are not merely acts of defiance for their own sake; they emerge from the inability of standardised frameworks to accommodate the complex and heterogeneous desires of Neapolitans. This gives rise to something that may initially appear as natural chaos, but in reality follows a distinct and fluid internal logic, as I will examine through my research. This particular and unconventional Neapolitan attitude unlocks intriguing potentials for rethinking both temporality and spatiality in the built environment. Just like the clock domesticating the elusiveness of time can be seen as a form of forced uniformity, a building can also be understood as an effort of domesticating and standardising space and motion, especially in the increasing modern trend towards homogenised and pre-engineered spatial assemblages (Harries, 1982, p.59). The assignment of specific functions and activities within buildings is just one manifestation of this tendency. This raises an essential question:

**WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF ARCHITECTURE
DESYNCHRONISED FROM UNIVERSAL STANDARDS,
AND INSTEAD TUNED INTO THE COMPLEXITY OF HUMAN
DESIRES AND BEHAVIOURS?**

*How could spatial assemblages be manipulated to create
overlapping rhythms rather than uniform beats?*

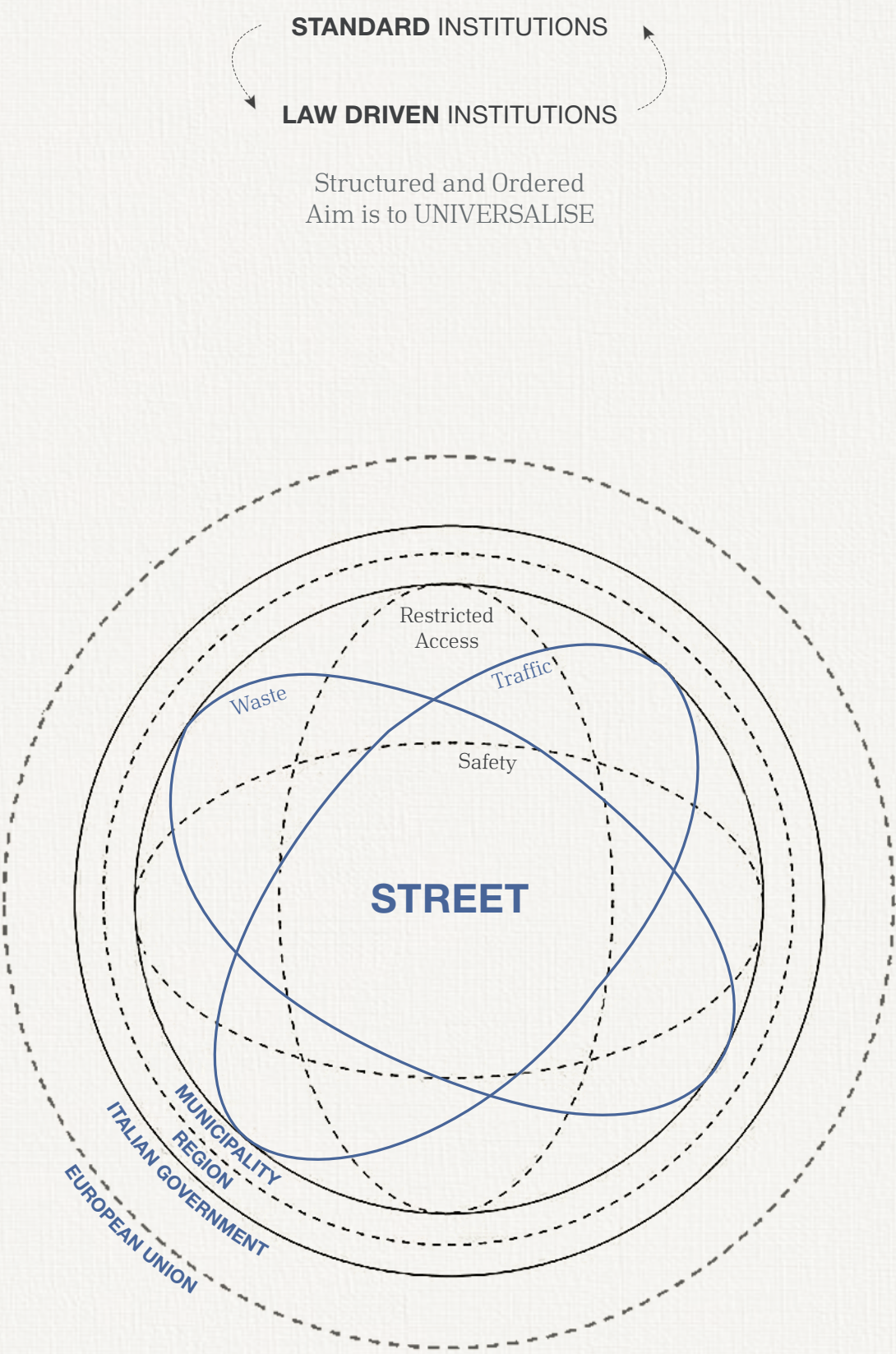


Figure 10.

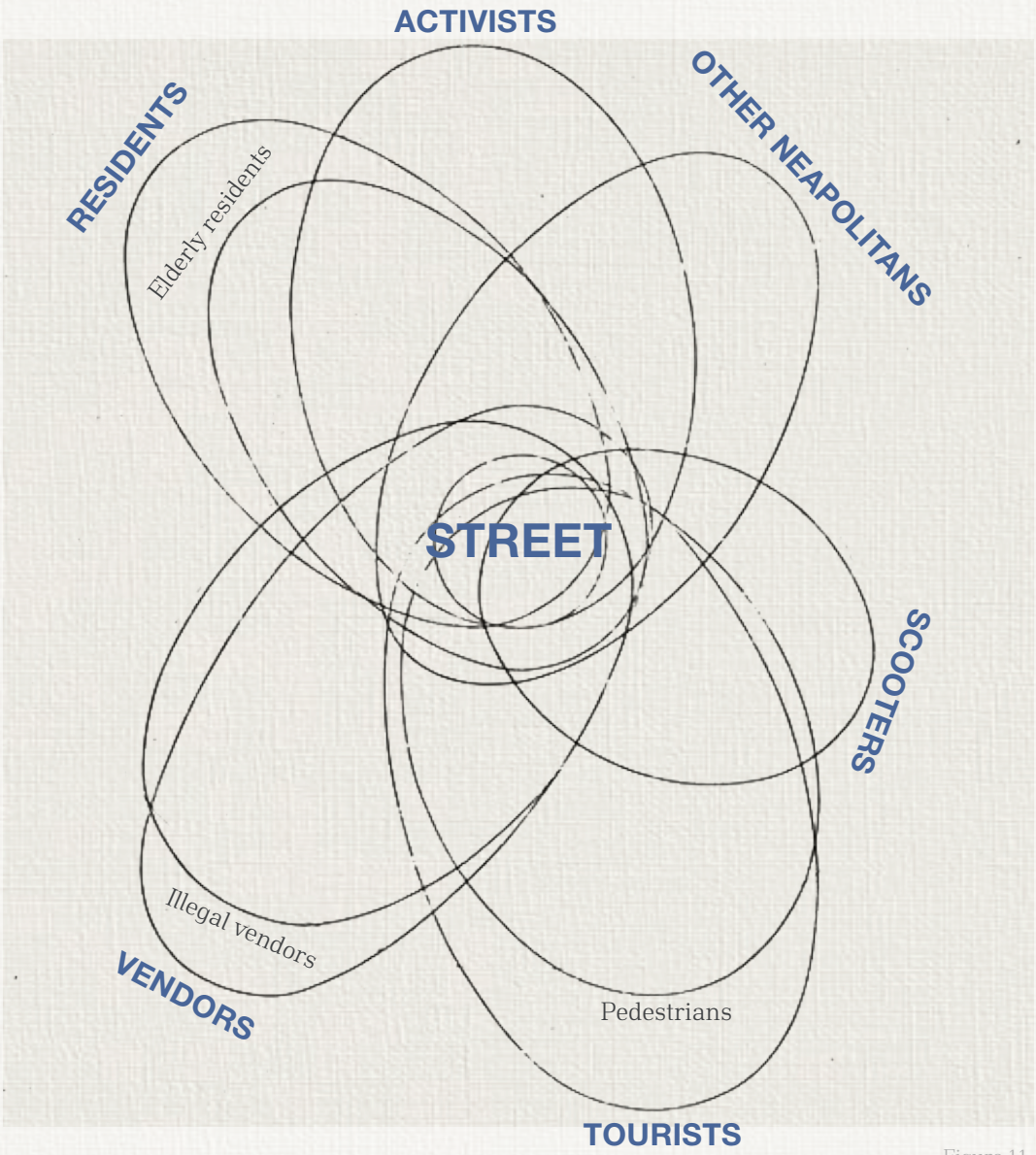
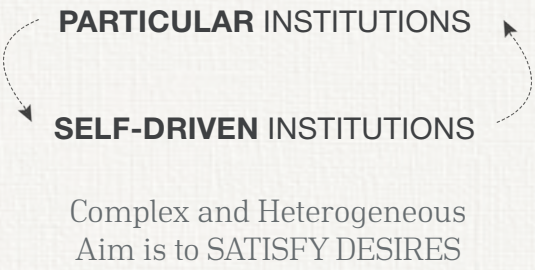


Figure 11.

STANDARD OPERATIONS

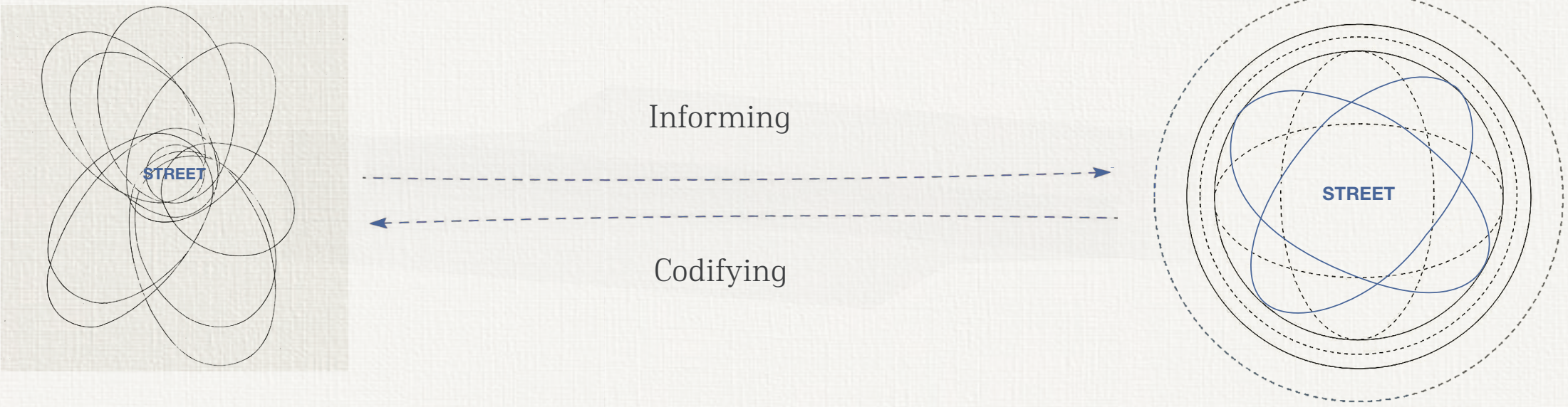


Figure 12.

NEAPOLITAN OPERATIONS

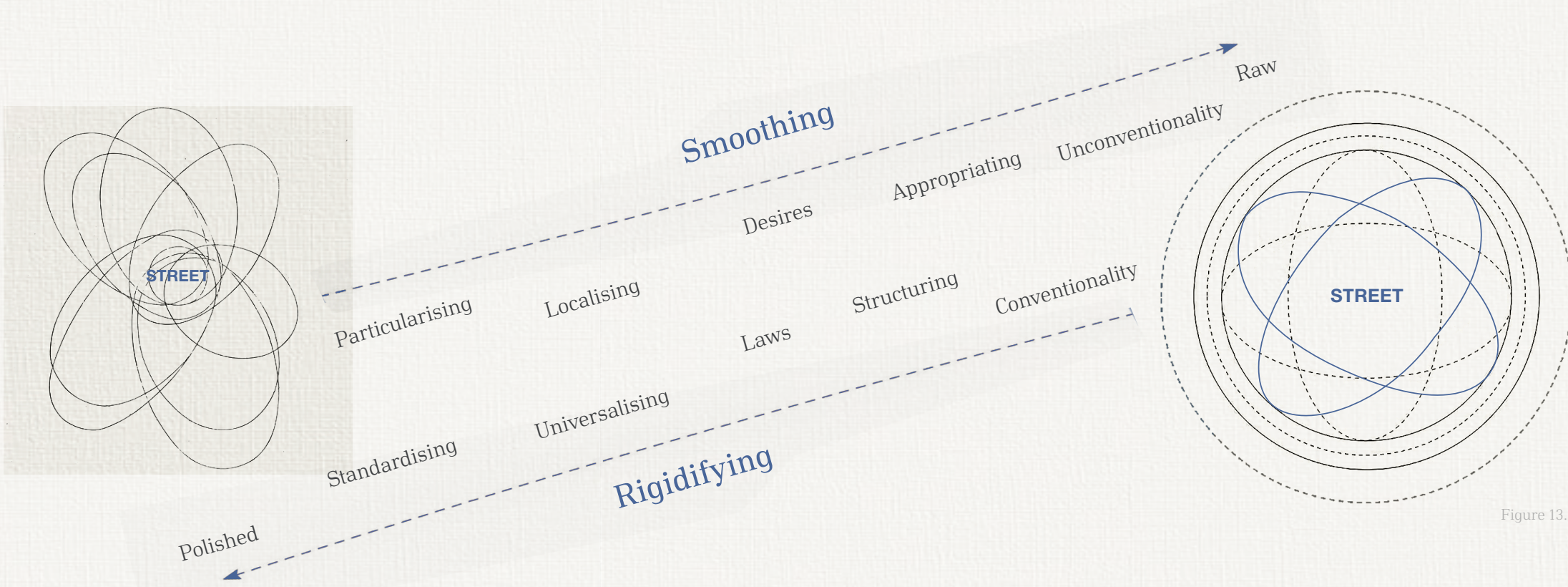


Figure 13.

Theoretical Framework

Environmental psychologist Korosec-Serfaty (1976, as cited in Lara-Hernandez, 2019, p.8) first introduced the term *appropriation* to describe a transitory process, in which individuals actively engage with and reshape their surroundings. This concept suggests a deliberate reclamation of space beyond aimlessness, and a fundamental human need to assert presence. To fully and critically examine appropriation, one must first analyse its status, but also its genealogy and process of becoming, both abstractly and within the specificity of Naples. My goal is to systematically explore appropriation, focusing on its internal logic while questioning, first and foremost, the notions of time, space and the *particular*.

As a research foundation, I will draw on the work of several philosophers, including Deleuze and Guattari, DeLanda and Simondon. Through their theories, I intend to develop a new framework for conceiving architectural assemblages, one that emphasises particularity and individuation over standardisation. This approach will employ *rhythm-analysis*, the study of everyday rhythms, as a tool for generating alternative conceptions of time and space within architectural designs. In doing so, I aim to create an experimental and unconventional architectural logic, more in sync with the instinctive *clocks* of human behaviours.

KEY DEFINITIONS

TERRITORY, RITORNELLO, SMOOTH SPACES, NOMAD
DE-CODIFICATION, EXPRESSIVE COMPONENTS
VITAL INDIVIDUATION, MEMBRANE



Figure 14.



Figure 15.



Figure 16.



Figure 17.

TERRITORIALISATION



Figure 14.

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari - A Thousand Plateaus

In Naples, temporary appropriation encompasses several themes, including territorialisation, deterritorialisation, smooth versus striated spaces, and nomadology. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus*, these concepts highlight how residents convert the streets from mere corridors of movement into vibrant spaces of interaction and living, an ongoing process of expression and possession that the two philosophers describe as territorialisation. This phenomenon reflects the dual nature of territory, where each act of appropriation implies a simultaneous deterritorialisation and redefinition of both the previous space and its boundaries (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.325).

In discussing territory, the concept of *ritornello* represents a crucial element. As summarised by Ronald Bogue in relation to Deleuze and Guattari’s work, a *ritornello* refers to any rhythmic pattern that marks a territory, through its contrapuntal expressive elements (Bogue, 2003, p. 17). It thus represents the act behind the formation of territory, its becoming, stabilisation or destabilisation over time. A *ritornello* encompasses three aspects: a point of stability, a circle of property and an opening to the outside (Bogue, 2003, p. 17). In the context of my research, these three components will be used as foundational elements for investigating appropriation through consistent and overlapping rhythms and patterns.

“Rhythm is the milieus’ answer to chaos. What chaos and rhythm have in common is the in-between—between two milieus, rhythm-chaos”
(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.313).

Studying spaces through a rhythm-analysis approach opens up the potential to redefine our universal conception of time within environments, shifting from a linear progression (A to B to C) to a spiralling, consequential one (A to A’ to A’’ to A’’’).

The study of smooth versus striated spaces, as defined by Deleuze and Guattari, is also critical for examining standards. It challenges how spaces are understood, not only based on their morphology and functionality, but also their flexibility to norms and institutions. *Smooth spaces* are described as open, continuous and fluid, allowing for constant movement and dynamics (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.363); in contrast, *striated spaces* are ordered and segmented, restricting movement through imposed rules and boundaries (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.370). Central to this spatial distinction is the figure of the *nomad*, the inhabitant of smooth spaces and agent of *rebellious temporality*.

All these theories, and their application to the urban landscape of Naples, aim to question its spaces through the lens of territory, its time through the *ritornello*, and appropriation as the milieu where these two elements intersect.

DE-CODIFICATION



Figure 15.

Manuel DeLanda - A New Philosophy of Society, Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity

When examining institutions and institutional systems, the concept of assemblages naturally comes into focus. Interpersonal and institutional networks are, in fact, essentially organised assemblages of people (DeLanda, 2006, p.5). A key theorist for the study of these assemblages is Manuel DeLanda, particularly his work on coding and decoding, material and expressive assemblages, and exteriority. In line with the concepts of territory and deterritorialisation, *codification* refers to the process of assigning rules and norms to assemblages, while *de-codification*, conversely, involves the loosening or breaking of these structures (DeLanda, 2006, p.15).

In the context of temporary appropriation in the streets of Naples, coding and decoding are key processes, as they assign household and street furniture new codes of action and new meanings. This transformative dynamic marks a distinction between the *a priori* (before) and *a posteriori* (after) state of the objects, a process that I plan to explore further in my research. This study also becomes relevant in discussions about the universal, where elements are often channelled into standardised and generalised sets of codes rather than spectra of particular intensities. My research seeks to restore this spectrum-thinking approach by proposing a heterogeneous and distinctive mode of categorising architectural components and practices, focusing not only on the existing characteristics but on their virtual potentials too.

A key element in developing this categorisation is DeLanda’s distinction between material and expressive components of assemblages. *Material components* encompass the physical and tangible elements of assemblages, whereas *expressive components* represent what these physical elements symbolise and signify, the *a posteriori* codes central to my study (DeLanda, 2006, p.12).

Finally, my research will also draw on DeLanda’s concept of *relations of exteriority*, which refers to the idea that elements within an assemblage cannot be understood in isolation but rather through their interconnections and interdependence (DeLanda, 2006, p.45). When applied to the framework of appropriation in Naples and the objects it involves, this theory highlights the technologies at play among different acts of appropriation and the systemic processes underlying these unconventional behavioural patterns.

Ultimately, all of these theories will guide my research in identifying where the singular, collective, time, space, experience and behaviours intersect.

Gilbert Simondon - Individuation in Light of Notions of Form and Information

Whenever we begin discussing the idea of territory and territorialisation, the notions of habit and habitat also come into play. If we translate these two concepts into Deleuzian terms, habitat can be compared to the idea of territory, whereas habit corresponds to the act of expressing and establishing such territorialisation over time. Habit represents a necessary process of internalising a space, during which experiences are formed and established within that territory (Simondon, 1964, p.257). These concepts are explored by Simondon in his work regarding *physical and vital individuation*, which I will also draw upon for the final part of my research.

In the context of Naples, the liminal negotiation between habits and habitats is precisely one of the pivotal factors underlying temporary appropriation. With a volcano on the horizon and several others hidden beneath the surface, coupled with challenging and fluctuating economic conditions, the habitat of the Neapolitans emerges as highly unstable, leading citizens to adopt a day-by-day living approach. Amidst this chaos within their habitat, it is through their habits that Neapolitans forge their own sense of stability and construct their unique societal institutions. Through the instrumentalisation of these habits, they challenge the threshold between the private and the public, as well as the membrane between the interior and the exterior.

These final theories within my research will be used to push my understanding of temporary appropriation not only in terms of its present condition and genealogy, but also in terms of its virtual potentials within the private versus public realm. Ultimately, this study of the interior and the exterior will help me challenge the concept of space and territory, along with its borders and their definition, or lack thereof.

MEMBRANES



Figure 16.



Figure 18.

Methodological Framework

To understand and investigate human habits and experiential patterns, it is essential first to grasp their broader processes and inherent systems. The work of theorists and philosophers offers valuable insights into these hidden logics, opening up explorations that enhance, or at the very least, respect their complexities. For this reason, my project will draw on extensive theoretical foundations as tools for tracing the genealogy behind appropriation reasoning and uncovering its virtual potentials.

While theoretical works provide valuable insights into human behaviours and the rhythms of life, concretising these sometimes challenging notions with strong visual components is equally crucial. To this end, my research will incorporate a collection of photographs, both personal and external to avoid bias, capturing the unconventional expressions of Neapolitan life. Specifically, I will focus on the works of Ciro Pipoli, Martin Parr, Sam Gregg, and Robbie McIntosh, whose images resonate with the scope of my research.

Though Naples is the central focus of my study, it should not be considered an isolated case of uncoded and spontaneous daily life. Moments of *rebellious temporality* against over-structured environments lie imperceptibly in many cities, often concealed by the rigidity of their settings. Works such as Beka and Lemoine's documentary series *Homos Urbanus* (2017-2022), with their candid framing of urban life, serve as powerful tools for identifying such instances of uncoded life, even in major metropolises such as Shanghai and Seoul, or more precisely in their 'backstage'. By consulting their work both in Naples and elsewhere, I aim to highlight the importance of legitimising these unconventional logics in urban contexts, and to emphasise Naples' role not as a marginalised entity but rather as a test-bed for their visibility and showcasing.

The photographs and documentary stills, alongside their respective theoretical 'lines of flights', will form the basis of the initial phase of my methodology. This preliminary stage will culminate in the realisation of a *catalogue of appropriation*, subdividing these seemingly chaotic practices into identifiable patterns, flow systems, and logics. By isolating these behaviours as catalogue entries, I aim to first understand their particular machinic processes and intensities, creating the premises for a later analysis of their collective *ritornello* and overlapping dynamics.

To ensure that these catalogue entries function not only representatively but also spatially and operatively, I will adopt *choreographic transcripts* and *chorographic mapping* in the second phase of my research to organise the previously isolated components into rhythmic clusters.

Choreographic transcripts offer a tool for understanding the spatiality of appropriation and, in the context of this research, they will serve as a device for interpreting behavioural patterns within spaces based on their spatial unfolding and movement rather than action and intent. To achieve this, the choreography will be used to abstract the behaviours from their immediate settings and conditions, allowing them to be viewed purely in terms of motion. As a precedent for this method, I will consult *The Manhattan Transcripts* by Bernard Tschumi (1994).

Chorographic mapping, in contrast, will emphasise the eventuality of appropriation. Unlike choreography, this tool will abstract behavioural patterns from their spatiality and movement, organising them by action, intent and event progression instead. As a precedent, I will focus on William Hole's *Poly-Olbion Maps* (Dayton, 1613), which depict various British counties according to their social and cultural identities and events, rather than geography and topography. Initially, *choreography* and *chorography* will be treated as separate exercises, later to be analysed in conjunction and within their areas of intersection.

Altogether, this methodology is designed to provide an exhaustive understanding of unconventional urban behaviours both objectively and subjectively, and across both temporal and spatial dimensions. The theoretical foundations, along with external photographs and documentary stills, aim to establish an objective basis of my studies, while choreography and chorography are intended as guides for subjective interpretations and operative insights for the research and project. Ultimately, I think this methodology will enable me to achieve my research goal: refine the inherent chaos of Naples into an operational *ritornello*, a permeable guiding logic of overlapping rhythms and desires encapsulated in an *encyclopaedic collection of unconventional rhythms*.



Figure 19.



Figure 20.



Figure 21.



Figure 22.

OVERLAP MAPPING

APPROPRIATION RHYTHMICITY

Investigate the overlapping
Creating a RITORNELLO



Figure 23.

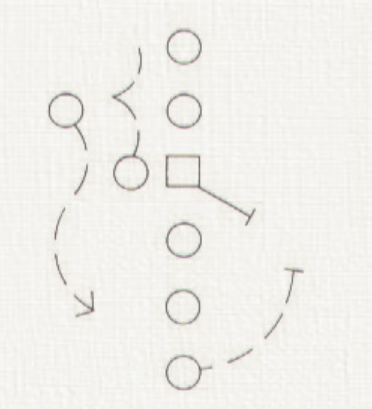


Figure 24.



Figure 25.

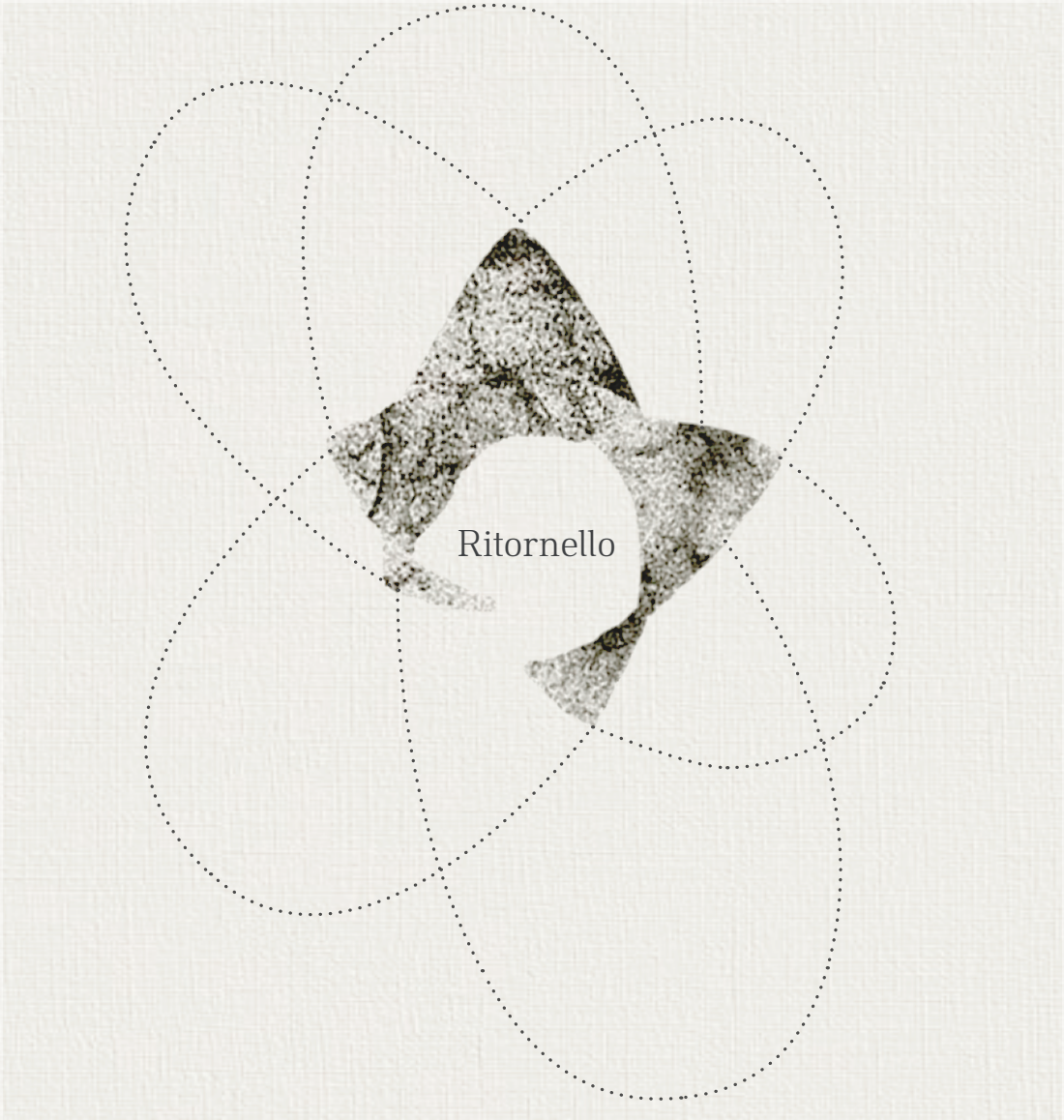


Figure 26.

Research Relevance & Intent

The contemporary state of architectural practice has increasingly become saturated with conventionality and homogenization: the proliferation of international institutions and global cultural systems has steered the profession toward standardised, problem-solving exercises, rather than critical modes of action (Erandole, 2022). This ingrained mindset, with its emphasis on timely and efficient solutions, has led architects to refrain from engaging with complex settings and dynamics. Phenomena like temporary appropriation, in fact, struggle to find a legitimate place within modern urban environments, often getting dismissed as disruptions to urban liveability and prompting an instinctive impulse to ‘fix’ rather than understand.

Even within discourses on *social inclusivity*, an inherently flawed tendency towards one-size-fits-all solutions has emerged. While the ongoing ambition to design environments suitable for the entire global population may seem optimistic in theory, it remains utopian in reality. True inclusivity, in my view, lies not in negating individuality for the sake of universal conformity, but in acknowledging frictions and heterogeneities between different agents as mechanisms, rather than obstacles.

My research seeks to overturn generalising architectural tendencies by promoting a framework that favours overlapping and particular experiences of time and space. By showcasing Naples as the test-bed where multifaceted experiences manifest organically, I aim to reintroduce instinctive and unscripted rhythms as *legitimate elements* of the built environment. However, I do not intend for this research to over-romanticize life in Naples; I recognize that many behaviours I examine stem from conditions of poverty and social distress. My goal is simply to understand these practices as *alternative thinking modalities* rather than problems. Setting aside conventional and standardising mindsets in architecture, in my opinion, can contribute to a necessary, more anthropological, and human-centric approach, focused on meeting the needs and desires of the very individuals the profession strives to serve.

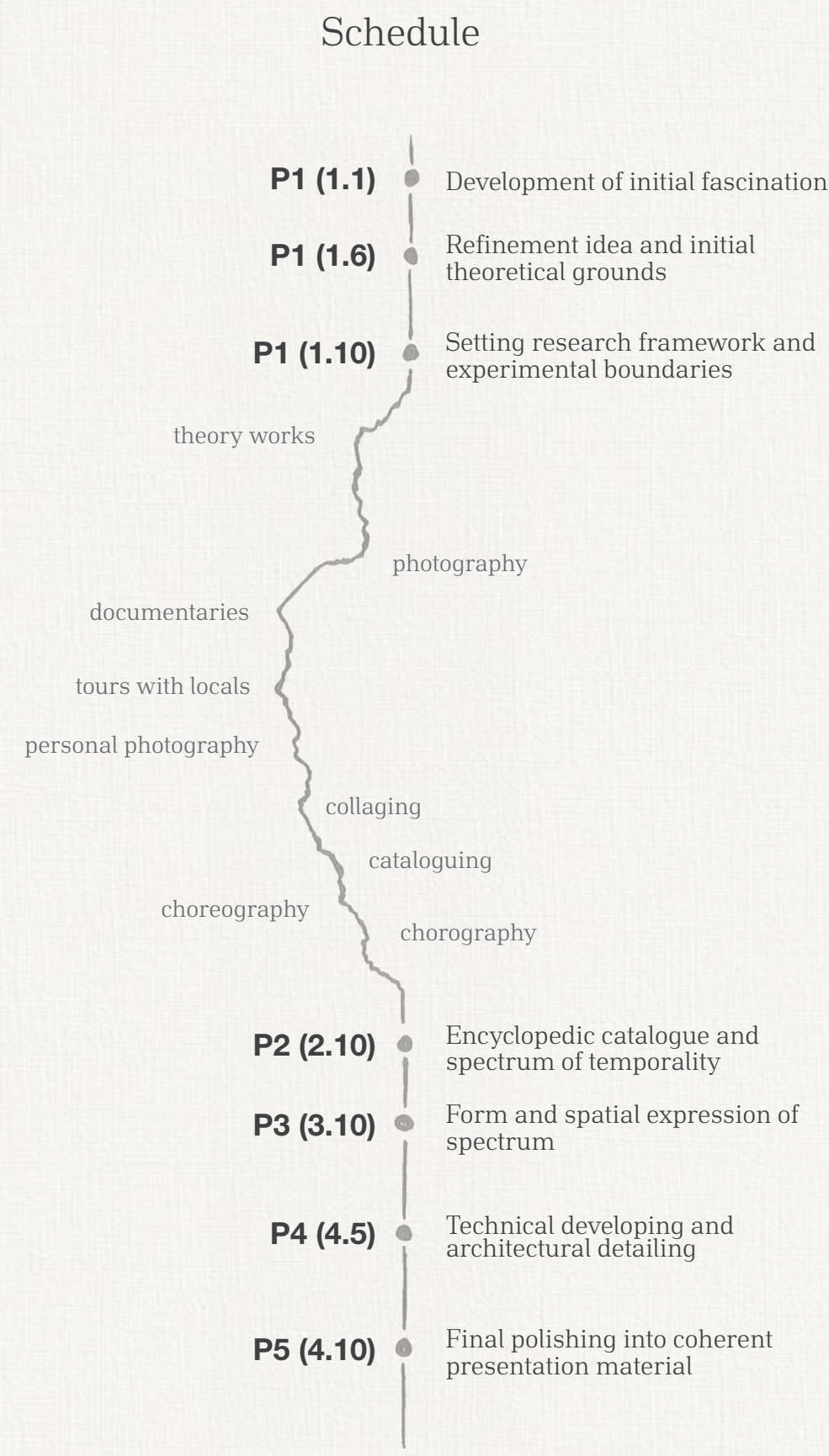


Figure 27.

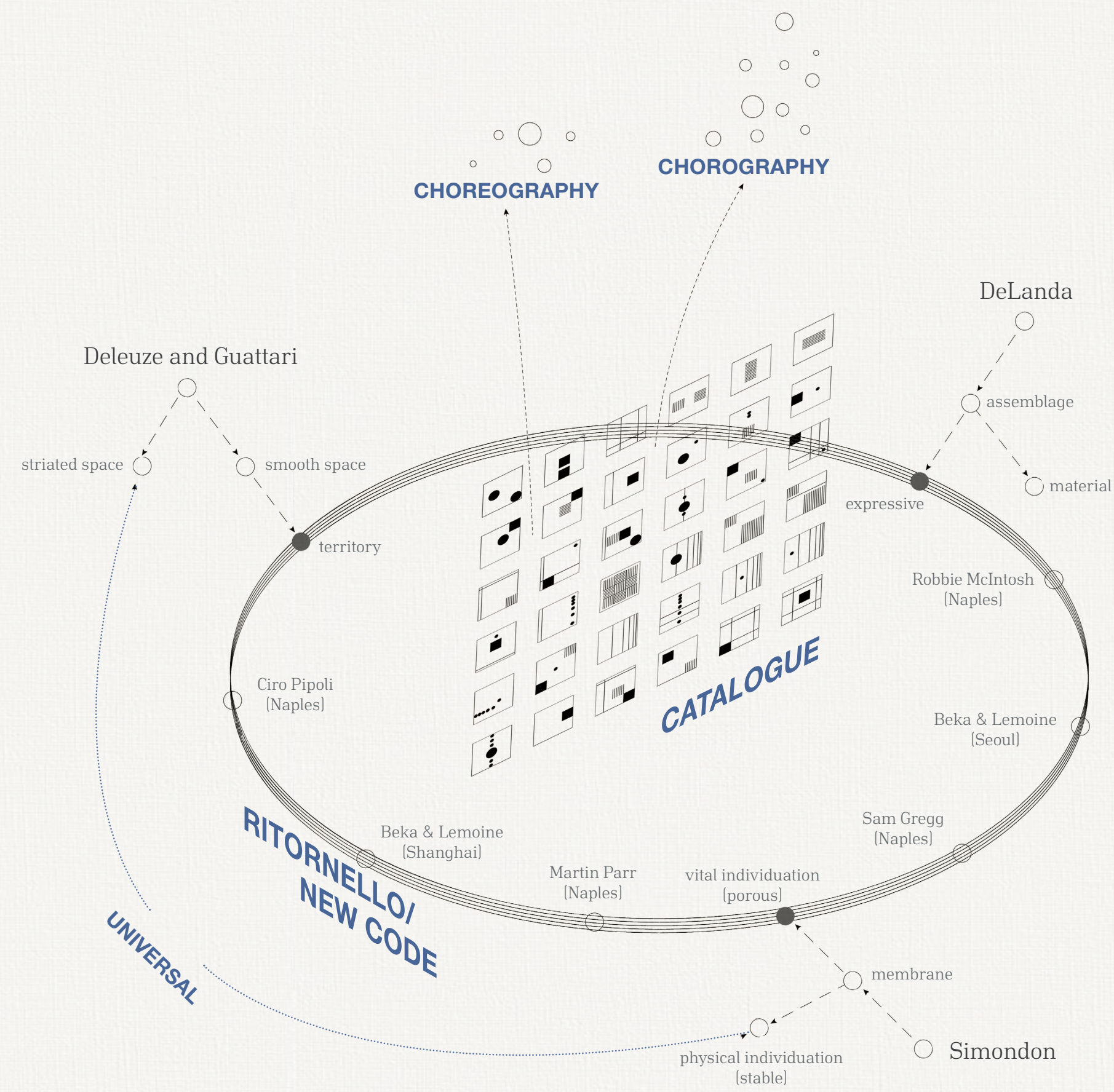


Figure 28.

Ethical Reflection

While my project aims to address appropriation objectively and sensitively by incorporating both internal and external sources, I recognise that it involves people’s lives and therefore requires careful ethical consideration. To ensure ethical integrity, I will obtain permission for photographs and blur any faces of which I have not explicitly received the consent.

Side Questions

How can I transpose my idea of cataloguing into a space that is not just an assemblage exercise?

How can architecture act as a membrane of multiple territories colliding into one single entity?

How can architects manipulate spatial assemblages to create ritornellos? And specifically ritornellos of appropriation?

Is a smooth space captured, enveloped by a striated space, or does a striated space dissolve into a smooth space, allowing a smooth space to develop?

Is the presence of standards always necessary in order to spot the counterpart? Do standards and particulars always work as a couple?

What role do tourism and performativity play in this rebellious temporality? To what extent do they enhance it but also artificialise it?

Can open territorial assemblages be created without falling into the trap of generalisation?

What does it mean to create an architecture design? What does the act of design automatically imply? How can those implications and biases be abolished?

What can happen if we try to isolate time and space?

How can a building or spatial assemblage have a porous membrane and a vital individuation in its programme ?

Is Naples the right location for any kind of intervention following the research question? Or is the role of Naples just to act as a case study for reintroducing smoothness in striated spaces?

Can behavioural complexity be staged? Or is it a practice that can only stem from an authentic and uninstitutionalised production?

Does the creation of a new code or ritornello of appropriation paradoxically imply a falling into a new category of standards?

What can porous spaces represent without being just open spaces or urban spaces ?

How can these unconventional practices meet non-open air spaces ? How can they meet designed spaces ?

What if I imagined this in a metaphysical space ? Until when can it remain hypothetical before becoming actually physical ?

Until where does the responsibility of the architect lie in the creation of permeable spaces? Until where and when am I meant to be pushing and when should I let it go?

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Figure 23: Hole, W. (1613), *Buckinghamshire Map* [Illustrative Map] From M. Drayton, *Poly-Olbion* (p.234-235). London:H.L..

Figures 24-25: Tschumi, B. (1994). *MT4* [Image] From B. Tschumi, *The Manhattan Transcripts* (p.46). London:ACADEMY EDITIONS.

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