I. Introduction

Over the past two decades, Italy has seen a strong and sudden immigration flux from countries outside Europe. As a consequence, Italians are redefining their national, cultural and local identities vis-à-vis the need to situate oneself between Europe and the various cultural realities of the immigrant diasporas. One conspicuous result of this change has been the increase in both acts of racism and racist rhetoric (Stolcke, 1993:34; Vasta, 1993). Starting from a linguistic anthropological understanding of social realities as interactionally constituted through language, this research proposes a microanalysis of modern Italian racist attitudes toward the immigrants and of the racialization of Self and Other on which they are staked. It starts from an understanding of racism as connected to processes of formation of modern nation states and national identities (Lentin, 2004:19). As Silverman notices, "racism is not an external evil which periodically plagues the body politic; it is an integral part of the very constitution of modern nation-states" (1992:26). I will investigate how Italians try to build agreement on what constitutes "us" and "them," on what constitutes racism and what does not, through everyday narratives. As Stacul has pointed out, "identity is constructed through interplay with the 'other,' and otherness may be an ongoing process in the same manner that identity construction is" (2003:94). The imagination of a "foreign Other" contributes significantly to the connected imagination of "us," the citizens who are now defending the right to "authentic belonging" on the Italian soil.

While many current studies on language and racism focus on the experience of the minority people and communities discriminated against, this research will focus on the discriminating majority and the ways they come to imagine themselves as majority, centering on the construction of racial categorizations and racism rather than on the study of the ways in which discriminated groups cope with it. At the same time, the research will not conceive of this majority as a homogeneous entity, but approach the several discourses present today in Italy around identity and belonging, and which may be in opposition to each other. Particular attention will be given to those cases in which agreement is not reached, and to the ways in which the conversationalists are able to effectively oppose and disagree with racist or racializing narratives.

Taking a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, this study considers race and racism as collaboratively performed discourses. Discourses are, in Foucault's definition, "practices which systematically form the objects of which they speak" (1972:49). In this study, I will consider "the immigrants," "the Albanians," "the Moroccans" etc. as constituted through practices that form their objects. Wodak notices that discourse "constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people" (1996:15). Thus discourse practices can "help produce and reproduce unequal power relations ... through the ways they represent things and position people" (Wodak, 1996:15). By analyzing discourses of racism in their interactional emergence, this study will: 1) probe the contextual meaning that concepts like "race" and "racial discrimination" receive from everyday social actors; 2) explore how such discourses emerge in everyday interactions; 3) reveal how, through storytelling and narratives, people reach an agreement on what constitutes Self and Other, in racialized terms; 4) understand when and how people are able to resist and refuse to agree with such narratives.

These issues are especially vital, as the accelerated pace of arrival of immigrants in Italy is staggering. After the regularization allowed by the Bossi-Fini law of 2002, the most recent estimates are for 2,400,000-2,500,000 legal immigrants at the end of 2003 (Caritas, 2003:100). The data for the illegal immigrants is obviously much less defined and subject to speculation, but they are estimated to be about 250,000 (Blangiardo, 2004:41). By comparison, the number of people with a permit to reside in Italy in 1992 was 648,935 (Macioti and Pugliese, 2003:37; Zincone, 2001). Over the last decade the number of immigrants on Italian soil has grown fourfold.

The research will be carried out in the region of Tuscany, in central Italy, in the provinces of Pistoia, Prato and Florence. During a pilot study in Summer 2005, I made contact with existing institutions fighting racism in these provinces. The *Centro Anti-Discriminazione of the Province of Pistoia*, the *Osservatorio Sociale of the Provinces of Pistoia and Prato*, as well as members of the city councils of Pistoia, Prato and Empoli (In Florence's Province) expressed their interest in my research and offered collaboration. They will facilitate my movements in the territory, including furnishing the information necessary to conduct a stratified sampling of the population. They are also interested in using the results to create programs against discrimination in their jurisdictions. My project would integrate research already done by these Provinces in collaboration with the Tuscan Regional government, the University of Florence and the European University in Florence (Project *Immigra*) and the ASEL (Agency for Services to the Local Economy). Part of their activities include the training of social workers as cultural mediators and the organization of workshop on discrimination addressed to groups who are more often in contact with immigrants. The results of my research will be used as material for these training workshops. I will also establish collaboration with associations and NGOs fighting racism in Italy and Europe, such as the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), S.O.S. Razzismo Italia association, the Antiracism Emergency Network, the association *L' Isola Che Non C'é*, Unimondo and the ARCI *Nero e Non Solo*.

Today more than 120 million people worldwide live in countries different from those of their origins. While my research will be limited to Italy, the implications and results have broader relevance. For instance, they will help understand the obstacles that are present today to the integration of immigrants in their countries of arrival, especially Western countries. In terms of its contribution to social science, my research will further understanding of language and discourse and of their impact of human mores. It will highlight the importance of narratives and storytelling in the construction of our understanding of the world and our way of making sense of it. It will advance a theoretical understanding of identity performance and racism, as constituted though language performance. Through its cross-disciplinary approach, it will bring together studies done in linguistics, anthropology and cultural studies, to lead to a deeper understanding of the ways in which individuals form their identities. The findings from the research will be presented in conference papers, submitted for publication in academic journals and published in a book over the following years. I intend to have my results translated and published in Italy as well. While an increase in knowledge of other cultures will not necessarily lead to less racism my goal in this research is to produce results that will increase knowledge, not of other cultures, but of the mainstream ways of relating to others. In terms of contributions to education, the results will be integrated in the material for the courses I teach, such as "Language in Culture and Society" and "Discourses of Nationalism and Racism," both to create examples and to teach research methods to students.

Finally, I should mention that this research will be carried out in concert with a second study by Dr. Robert Garot (Bowling Green State University), on "The Bureaucratic Categorization of Immigrants in Contemporary Tuscany." Garot, who has collaborated with me in my pilot studies of immigration in Tuscany, will investigate the racial categorization practices of street-level bureaucrats. We intend to publish some of our results together. This collaboration will allow us to observe the feedback between actions of government agents and those of everyday social actors, exploring how government actors may enact "common sense" notions of racial stereotypes, while on the other hand the presuppositions and behaviors enacted by bureaucrats may be mirrored in discourses of everyday life.

II. Context: *The Phenomenon of Immigration to Italy and the Formation of Europe*

While in Italy the 4.6% ratio of immigrants in respect to the general population (Cesareo, 2004:7) is not as high as in traditional receiving countries like the United States, and actually lower than other European countries, the pace of arrival has accelerated dramatically during the past two

decades, and their composition is quite diverse. Almost 200 nationalities are represented in Italy (Cesareo, 2004:8). The largest group comes from Morocco (172,834 in 2003, or 11.4% of the total) (data from the Ministry of the Interior, in Papavero, 2004:356). The second largest group is constituted by Albanians (168,963 in 2003) (Papavero, 2004:356). However, in 1990 only 424 Albanians were present (Istat 2001). This partially explains why Albanians are today depicted as the "new barbaric horde" in Italy and why much racism is enacted against them: the rapidity of change makes them particularly socially evident. They are even more evident in those regions that have absorbed a large flux of immigrants, such as Tuscany. During the nineties, many of the immigrants to Italy came from Eastern Europe and the ex-communist countries, Arab countries, China, Africa, the Philippines, and South America (Columbia, Ecuador). In 2003 there were 95,501 legal immigrants from the ex-Yugoslavia states, 95,834 from Romania, 37,667 from ex-Eastern Germany, 35,077 from Poland, 12,735 from Russia, and other countries such as Ukraine (14,035) and Bulgaria (Papavero, 2004:356). Most of these are very recent immigrants. The number of immigrants from China has been growing at a slower pace, but they are today the 5th largest group in Italy (62,314 in 2003) (Istat 2001; Papavero, 2004:356). They are particularly relevant to our research since a large number of them have established themselves in Tuscany. In the last three years, the fastest growing influxes have been from the Ukraine (predominantly women), Ecuador, Romania and Moldavia (Cesareo, 2004:17).

In term of structures for receiving the immigrants, laws, educational system, etc. Italy has been often unprepared for their arrival. One of the major problems for the immigrants is to find suitable homes (Granata, Lanzani and Novak, 2004:161) and many of them remain homeless or living in substandard housing. The legislation in matters of immigration was practically absent until 1987, and still today is in a flux that keeps many immigrants in a situation of alegality (Macioti and Pugliese, 2003). This in turn may push some of them toward illegal activities. Today 1 out of every 3 persons in prison in Italy is an immigrant. However, most of them are detained for crimes connected to their original position of irregularity (Di Nicola, 2004:186). In fact the ratios of deviance for the legal immigrants are lower than for the general Italian population (Di Nicola, 2004:186). A climate of near-hysteria has arisen around the supposed criminal activities of the extra-communitarian immigrants, and the mass media have undoubtedly had an important role in its creation. For example, Gardner (2004) shows that while only a small fraction of immigrant women are prostitutes, the media give to them disproportionate attention (2004:256). He points out that the mass media create a fear of the immigrants by portraying them as an invasion supposed to smother a zero-growth Italian population (2004:250). Sibhatu's work (2004) also illustrates "the distorting and instrumental role of the media" (2004:260) in Italy and their "centrality in guiding public opinion" (2004:270). Foot (2001), in his study of immigrants in Turin, shows that the media contributed to create an image of the immigrants as dangerous and criminals, leading to their harassment by the police.

The arrival of these immigration waves happens within the background of recent changes in European political and economic organization, which have led to the ongoing creation of a "European identity" (Goddard, Llobera and Shore, 1994; MacDonald, 1993). Scholars of the European Union have shown that while such European identity is all but an accomplished fact (Bellier & Wilson, 2000), the political and socio-economic transformations of the new Europe are leading to the emergence of several new identities. Scholars have also analyzed the connections between these new identities and the arrival of immigrants from countries outside Europe (Spohn and Triandafyllidou, 2003; Wintle, 1996; Solomos & Wrench, 1993). That the creation of a European identity has been a top-led effort of social engineering has been shown by Shore (1993, 1997), who argues that while Europe-minded politicians have been discussing ways to forge integration since the seventies, the continuous creation of symbols of unity had not affected the way people define themselves by the middle of the nineties (Shore and Black, 1994). At the same time, it is important to

notice, as Holmes (2000) shows, that integralist, culture-based rhetorics have been used by European party leaders to reinforce ideas of fundamental differences between Europeans and Non-Europeans and to veil the enactments of racism policies by European governments. As Miles has argued, the creation of a new European identity seems to unavoidably imply the exclusion of the Other (Miles, 1993). Shore and Black notice that while the old national barriers "come down within the Union the walls separating 'Europe' from the dark continents of non-Europe seem to grow higher and more impenetrable" (1994: 293). For example, the Schlengen agreement effectively assured a change in policy in regard to immigrants where Italy went from an "open door" policy to the passing of increasingly restrictive laws against immigration. However, we cannot suppose that this boundary is itself readily accepted by the population. In Italy, notwithstanding its continuous reification by the mass media and fixation in immigration laws (Shore & Black, 1994), the status of Europe as a symbol of identification is at least partially contested.

At the same time, refusing to adopt a European identity cannot be immediately understood as allegiance to national identities. Italians, in particular, never developed a strong sense of national identity (Levi, 1996). As John Davis notes, "the true historical locus of identity and loyalty in Italy has been more localized -- the city, the village, the community" (Davis, 1996:54; see also Vasta, 1993:92). Italian nationalism itself has been a partial failure, at least as its first proponents envisioned it (Pagliai and Lee, 2002). The centrifugal interests of the municipalities and the rivalries among them always offered a check to the power of the centralized government of the state (Montroni, 1995). Municipalities still form a strong pressure group today. Thus, it is important to avoid considering "Italians" as a monolith that will answer all together in the same way to immigration and europeanization. Instead, Italy's geographical position as Mediterranean bridge between Europe and Africa has become symbolic, for many Italians, of the clash between different sets of historical, cultural and political allegiances.

III. Articulation of the Theory and Literature Review

III.a. Race, Culture and Identity

According to Balibar (1988), a *new racism* is emerging in Europe where cultural differences have become naturalized. As Gilroy notices (2004:xii), cultural racism has substituted the previous biologically based racism. Racist claims are hidden under assertions of "civilizational differences" (2004:xiii) so that "the convenient argument that some cultural differences are so profound that they cannot be bridged has become commonplace" (2004:xv). Baumann (1996) argues that the concept of culture itself has been naturalized in dominant discourse. A consequence of such reification is a "false fixing of boundaries" (1996:11). According to Bauman, "this reification is the very cornerstone that holds the dominant discourse together across all political divides" (1996:11). Räthzel (2002:7) notices that "the new right argues that in order to preserve the variety of cultures, people from different cultures need to stay in their respective places." As a consequence, celebration of diversity per se is no warranty against racism (2002:9). Connected to this naturalization of cultural difference is a substitution of the term "ethnicity" to replace the scorned term "race." As Stolcke (1993:24) notices, ethnicity was supposed to be connected to culture, but it immediately came to be naturalized and connected to descent. Ethnicity thus "tended to downplay or side-step racism, that is, discriminations and exclusions ideologically justified as resulting from supposedly really existing racial, and hence hereditary, moral or intellectual deficiencies" (Stolcke, 1993: 24). Ethnopolitics transform the concept of culture into "a reified entity that has a definite substantive content and assumes the status of a thing that people 'have' or 'are members of'" (Baumann, 1996:12). Cultural boundaries come to be identified with ethnic boundaries and community boundaries, each in turn reified and naturalized (Baumann, 1996:16-17; see also Wikan, 2002).

Current research has shown that identities are contextual and constructed in interaction as multiple and performed. For example, Cohen (1978) notices that every attempt to define an ethnic

group by creating a boundary is artificial, and cannot account for the many *situational* transformations of ethnic identity. A person will enact and communicate the particular ethnic identity of the ethnic group that is taken as referential in a given context. These transformations are based on an analysis of the situation and in consideration of the participants in interaction. The shift among identities happens in reference to definitions of the self and others. The individual uses particular identities in a strategic way, and actively redefines them and the roles associated with them, citing Bruner: "in reference to all the significant others in the particular context"(1973:225). To see ethnicity as performance brings into relief its co-construction in the interaction between interlocutors, complicating notions of agency by multiplying the possible authors for each instance of identity presentation. Identity is not given outside of social interactions, but built in performance (Pagliai, 2003). Multiple identities are not available once and for all, but they are continuously constructed and the audience's participation, both active and passive, is fundamental in such construction.

However, the naturalization of culture and ethnicity has led to a belief in identity as an innate, natural and fixed trait of the individual, namely as essential and defining the self permanently. In everyday encounters people's actions often imply this "fixed" view of identity that sees ethnic groups as stable and self-perpetuating social units to which the individual belongs by birth or primary socialization. People in an ethnic group are seen as sharing traits: language, blood, religion, folklore, etc. This model, as Kroskrity has noted (1993:191), offers a supposedly objective basis to racist and discriminatory claims. In Italy today, naturalized views of culture and ethnicity are associated with discriminatory statements against Southern Italians or immigrant groups (Allievi, 2002). For example, the Northern League recently staged protests against Muslims and pressured the government to prohibit their entrance in Italy, following the right-wing Italian political scientist Giovanni Sartori, who wanted Muslims excluded "to avoid an upsurge of 'defensive' racism which, he said, would be quite justified" (Allievi, 2002: 45).

Part of the difficulty in using racism as a concept in the European context has also been due to a restrictive understanding of racism that sees it as expressed through the "white/black" divide. This reification of blackness and whiteness (Lentin, 2004:18) has led some thinkers to ignore forms of racisms that cannot be subsumed under this categorization. In this perspective, racial hate in Italy against Albanians or Polish immigrants, or against Southern Italians, cannot be understood, gets mystified under the label of "ethnic discrimination" and becomes invisible. An analysis of racism and racialized identities needs to consider how discourses around race can be shifted away from skin color and repositioned on other assumed characteristics of immigrants' behavior, including dress, living habits, and moral qualities, complicating and blurring the theoretical boundary between race and ethnicity. In my past pilot research in Italy I have noticed that immigrants of different origins may be seen as belonging to the "racial self" or as being of a "different race" depending on the Italian people's contextual construction of themselves as "Europeans" or "Africans," and the connected construction of the immigrants as "white others" (e.g. Ukrainians, Albanians) or "colored others" (e.g. Chinese, Sub-Saharan Africans). Through an attention to everyday conversations and to narratives produced about the immigrants, this research will be able to analyze discourses of racism in their interactional emergence, and see the grounded contextual meaning that concepts like "race" and "racial discrimination" receive from the speakers.

Gilroy (1992:50) and Baumann (1996:24-25) notice that both the conservatives and the left, including anti-racism groups, accept the vision of culture as reified and naturalized, albeit in different ways and with different goals and priorities. This has the effect to focus anti-racist effort toward multiculturalism without encouraging a parallel discussion of institutional and political racism. For example, elements of reified immigrant cultures (in particular music, language, food and dress) are increasingly accepted and adopted by Italian progressive youth. The reappropriation of symbols of African culture, in particular, is mediated by a view of Africa as symbol of resistance to oppression.

As Lentin notices, "the idea that knowledge of the histories and customs of other cultures would engender a greater degree of tolerance ... continues to underpin a form of anti-racism that sees racism as prejudicial behavior" (2004:81). This multicultural approach tends to fix, reify and essentialize cultural and ethnic identities and can be easily co-opted to reinforce racist discourses (Lentin, 2004:22). In Italy, notices Lentin, this often includes the organization of multiethnic concerts, dinners and festivals. A sensation that these are not leading anywhere and not contributing to a diminishing of racism was present among the anti-racist activists I have contacted. A reason why the Province of Pistoia welcomed the proposal of my research was the felt need to move the focus away from the immigrants and toward the receiving society and its ways of thinking. In this respect, this study will provide new means to rethink anti-racist action. Programs created to diminish racist attitudes among the general population should not only consider the ways in which state policies contribute to racism (Räthzel, 2002:23), but also consider the mechanism through which racists discourses are reproduced at the level of everyday encounters, since it is in these encounters that discourses become shared and state ideologies are filtered and become part of the general thinking of the single individuals. While an institutionalization of anti-racist policies is necessary (Fortman, 2002: 78), from the literature emerges a need for a clear understanding of the problem of the growth of racist feelings among the general population, which in turn would help shape institutional policies that would not reproduce the problem they try to solve (Fortman, 2002:78).

III.b. Narrative Performances and Creation of Participant Frameworks

This research comprises an understanding of racial identities as discursively constructed through the articulation of participant frameworks around the telling of stories about immigrants and their behavior. Following Goodwin's definition, participant frameworks refer to the way in which "activities align participants toward each other in specific ways ... and this process is central to the way in which activities provide resources for constituting social organization within face-to-face interaction. ... In addition to being positioned vis-à-vis each other by the activity, relevant parties are frequently characterized or depicted in some fashion, for example, animated (Goffman 1974, 1981) as figures or characters within talk" (Goodwin 1990:10). The activities under analysis will be conversations and in particular the performance of narratives. These activities align participants toward each other as sharing common identities (Italian, Tuscan, etc.). This in turn constitutes the social organization of Italian society as it comes to bear on an interaction. As the relevant parties (immigrants) come to be animated in the narratives, becoming characters in the talk, speakers participate in the everyday creation of discourses about identity, belonging, race and racism. In interaction participants continuously align themselves in respect to the topic under discussion. Goffman called "footing" the alignment that speakers achieve in interaction and noticed that "a change in footing implies a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance" (1981:128). Individuals in interaction align themselves to maintain agreement with each other around the frame of reference of the conversation itself, namely around meaning. The alignments of the participants allow them to cooperatively achieve understanding or, as Clark (1996) puts it, to establish a common background for interpretation of "what is going on" in the interaction. Alignment and agreement in respect to the frame of reference define and position the interactants in the same community, the same reality, and the same social fabric.

During pilot research in Tuscany, I noticed that once the topic of "the immigrants" was brought up in conversations, a series of alignments took effect. People would discuss at length the meaning of immigrants' presence and their behavior. The simple mention of immigrants immediately shifted the frame of the encounter, as people began to reflect on the behavior, ways of thinking, ways of acting, and causes for actions of "us" (the Italians and Tuscans), versus "them" (the Albanians, Chinese or other immigrant group). At the center of these shifts were often short narratives, which

were retold to the point that they could be simply invoked through a few words. The fact that they could be so readily invoked is particularly interesting, as it shows that what was relevant was not simply the narrative as "giving information" but the narrative as establishing common agreement around the way the immigrants had to be thought about. In Duranti's words "*speakers design their speech according to their own on-going evaluation of their recipient as a member of a particular group of class*" (1997:299; italics in the original). In Tuscany, speakers seemed to choose to invoke narratives around immigrants as they evaluated their recipient as a member of an in-group of people, in a sense indexing indirectly a common identity. Thus, identity is defined by the possibility to have meaningful interactions around narratives of "otherness."

The telling of narratives also implies a notion of performance, in its meaning of language use in interaction. Bauman defines performance as "a mode of communication, a way of speaking, the essence of which resides in the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative skill" (1986:3; see also Hymes, 1981:132). In this case, responsibility is implied in the choice to consider the interlocutor as part of a class that can share and appreciate the speakers' footing toward the narrative itself, and thus his/her attitude toward the immigrants to whom the narrative refers. Thus the performance of narratives around immigrants performs a reification both of the immigrant identity and of the identity of the conversationalists. Bauman (1986) has further argued that events themselves can be "abstractions from narratives" (1986:5). Performance is a way of creating, not just representing, social reality. The narratives around immigrants define the immigrants' behavior and they become increasingly powerful in reifying the images of the immigrants they carry as they are performed anew in new conversations. Social structure itself can be said to become emergent in performance (Bauman, 1977:42), and thus social identities, including those Italians are claiming for themselves and those they are attributing to the immigrants.

However, we can expect that people may also choose to dis-align themselves from the conversation. In a conversation among friends I witnessed in summer 2005, speaker 1 connected the terrorist bombing in London to the "problem" of immigrants who do not want to integrate. Speaker 2, however, instead of agreeing, dis-aligned herself by noticing that Italians did not want to integrate either when they went as immigrants to other countries. Speaker 1 retorted that Italians eventually did integrate. Speaker 2 then invoked racism openly by saying that the reason why Italians could integrate was because they were considered white. In this snippet speaker 2 shifted the ground of the conversation by equating the immigrants to the Italians themselves as immigrants and by invoking racism openly, uncovering the racist overtone of speaker 1's statements. As this example shows, it is extremely important to understand how people are able to effectively dis-align themselves from racist discourses and contradict racist or racializing narratives. In choosing to dis-align herself, speaker 2 deployed an "argumentative speech style" (Lunsford, Ruszkiewicz and Walters, 2004). By studying dis-alignments, this research could furnish information to be used in "argumentative styles" workshops, where people could be trained to dis-align with racist discourses. These workshops could be more effective in fighting discrimination than simply teaching about "respect for differences" or similar multiculturalist approaches. As it is true, as Cameron (2001) argues, that people think through the discourses they have available, then an effective technique could be to teach them to effectively use different discourses present in a society to contrast racist narratives.

III.c. Language, Racialization and Racism

In general, studies of racism tend to see it as born out either of social structure (institutional racism; Sacks, 1998) or individual psychology (Tajfel, 1981). Instead, this research will consider racism as interactionally achieved and as connected to the creation of an image of the self and other. It will look at race as contextually agreed upon categories. As such, the study will belong to a tradition of inquiry on the emergence of racist discourses in everyday life pursued by researchers such as van Dijk (1993) Wodak, (1989); and Essed (1991). Differently from studies which focus on

the racist discourses produced by the Western elites and propagated through the mass media and the educational institutions (such as Wodak and van Dijk, 2000), my research will focus on the discourses around race among the general population. Moreover, rather than spanning the whole Western experience, it will focus on the particular experience of Tuscan Italians. This shift toward a microanalysis will allow me to focus on actual encounters and the narratives exchanged in them.

Many current studies on language and racism focus on the experience of the minority people and communities discriminated against. For example, Bailey's work with Dominicans in Providence (2002) shows how language can be used as a resource in the interactional negotiation of multiple racialized identities. Urcioli's study of Puerto Ricans in New York (1996) focuses on the discrimination and racism faced by Puerto Rican Americans due to their use of language (their code-switching between Spanish and English) and on the connection between linguistic ideologies around standard language and socio-economic disadvantage. In a similar vein, Zentella (1997) has discussed the effects on New York Puerto Rican youth of the discrimination they face as bilingual speakers. Linguists and sociolinguists, such as Lippi-Green (1997) and Baugh (2002) have studied the roots of discrimination against African American Vernacular English in its connection to racism against African Americans. Numerous studies on language and racism focus on the rights of linguistic minorities and on bilingualism; among them Honeyford (1988), Urla (1995) and Rampton (1995). Studies have been done on the reinforcement of stereotypes and increase of racism due to miscommunication or *crosstalk* (Gumperz, 1979) or different styles of interaction (Philips, 1972).

III.d. Studies on Racism and Immigration in Italy

While demographic quantitative analyses of the attitudes of Italians toward the immigrants are present (see Barbagli, 2002; Guala, 1989), qualitative studies oriented toward a more in depth understanding of the formation of such attitudes are still few, although the interest in studying immigration to Italy and Southern Europe is on the rise. An important work is Cole's ethnography on racism against immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa (1997), which compares their situation in Sicily and Northern Italy. Cole's work centers on the feelings and reactions of the majority Italians, rather than on the point of view of the immigrants. Of equal interest is Carter's work (1997) on Senegalese immigrants in Turin, which examines the racialist discourse of the media and the state, interrogating the role of the racialized policies of the second. Still focusing on the Senegalese, but in Bologna, is the work of Riccio (2002) on the creation of immigrants' transnational networks. Finally, a recent volume edited by Grillo and Pratt addresses the shortcomings of the multiculturalist ideals proposed as a solution to growing racist feelings against immigrants. My study, focusing on central Italy, integrates these studies. As a linguistic anthropological study, it will add a microanalytical perspective. In particular, I will focus not on actual behaviors of the Italians and immigrants, but on the perception and construction of behavior in interaction and on the shared discourses around the "essential" qualities of certain immigrant groups. The need for investigation in this direction has been indicated recently by Castellanos (2005) who is studying the perception of Senegalese and Albanian immigrants in Bergamo, Northern Italy, and Stacul (2005) who has been looking at the construction of immigrants through everyday practices in Trentino. My study will integrate theirs by looking at such construction through the methodological lens of discourse analysis and conversation analysis. A research comparable to the one I am proposing was carried out by Caronia (1997) who interviewed elementary school teachers in the Emilia-Romagna region and asked them for stories about their immigrant students. In the tradition of Discourse Analysis already pioneered by van Dijk, Caronia shows how the teachers construct a sense of the self as teacher and of the immigrant children as Other subjected to stereotypization. In regard to the areas of Prato, Pistoia and Florence, a few studies have been done under the patronage of the *Centro di Ricerca e Servizi per L'Immigrazione Comune di Prato* (Ceccagno, 2003; Ceccagno, 2004; Marsden, 2005) and of the *Osservatorio Immigrazione Provinciale di Prato* (Bisogno, Marchetti et al., 2005). These are mainly statistical

analysis of the phenomenon of immigration and its impact on the local economy and on the education system. My study will complement this information by furnishing a qualitative approach and also by studying the majority rather than the immigrants.

One issue that emerged in my review of the studies is an avoidance of the term "racism," with "ethnic discrimination" and "xenophobia" being the preferred terms. This goes together with a general tendency to externalize racism, seeing it as a problem of others, recently imported to Italy by the immigrants themselves (Lentin, 2004:163). This perception endures notwithstanding the fact that Northern racism and orientalist attitudes toward Southern Italy have existed since unification (Lentin, 2004:165-166; Vasta, 1993:93). Why this avoidance of naming racism? According van Dijk (1993a), denial of racism is connected to the presence of official egalitarian ideologies of the nation-state. In Italy, the official dominant ideology refuses racism as irreconcilable with progressive ideals. Racism is "outmoded" and nobody openly associates themselves with it. Instead, the discourses developing refer to differences among groups of people that are considered natural and fixed. The discourses around the "inassimilable" immigrant, for example, are often associated with a (false) perception of most immigrants as Muslim (most immigrants to Italy are Christian). Van Dijk has studied the mechanism by which people produce racist statements about Others without appearing to actually be racist (1987). He notes that this is possible through a negative presentation of the Other's behavior in stories so that the final negative judgment becomes necessary and defensible (1987: 62). Storytelling thus has a strong role "in the diffusion of ethnic prejudice and the reproduction of racism" (1987: 65). The invoking of natural and inescapable "cultural differences" can also be a strategy the teller uses to avoid attribution of personal racism (1987: 81). These stories also have persuasive power and, according to van Dijk, this is exactly what makes them into tools to propagate racist judgments against minorities. To contrast to this denial of racism, my research aims at showing the deep connection of racism to everyday thinking in Italy, refocusing racism as *our* problem.

IV. Integration with Principal Investigator's Other Research

In the past I have extensively explored the performance of social identities in storytelling and verbal art. In my work on identity and place in Italy (Pagliai, 2000; 2003) I demonstrated that multiple identifications are created, reshaped and negotiated in interaction, through the analysis of the *Contrasto,* a Tuscan Italian genre of sung improvised poetry. I showed that Tuscan folk performers use verbal art to create images of the self and the other, presenting to their audience images of local Tuscan identities and their connection to local places. The analysis was based on fieldwork research in Tuscany conducted between 1994 and 2001, which included participant observation with video and audio recording of verbal duels and Community Theater performances. I conducted in-depth interviews and group interviews with folk singers, and with the members of 13 community theater groups. The results of this research were publicized through articles and conferences papers. Among them "Lands I Came to Sing: Negotiating Identities and Places in the Tuscan *Contrasto*," published in *Pragmatics*. I am currently finishing a book on the *Contrasto* entitled *Through Veils of Words: Verbal Duels and the Aesthetics of Resistance in Tuscany*.

Performance, however, is not just characteristic of staged verbal art genres, but is integral to any instance of language use (Bauman, 1977; Bauman & Briggs, 1990; Briggs, 1988; Duranti, 1997). In my previous research on the construction of Italian American identities through storytelling in everyday interaction (conducted in 1994-95), I demonstrated that a sense of common Italian American identity, community and shared past is created through the performance of stories, showing how identity is done at the micro-level of conversation and how multiple identities can be invoked and conversationally performed (Pagliai, 1997). The analysis was based on fieldwork with the Italian American community in Los Angeles. I used participant observation with video and audio recording of community events, meetings, religious activities and festivals, and analyzed one year of issues of local community newspapers. I videotaped and audiotaped family dinners and dinner

parties. I conducted in-depth interviews with members of the community. By analyzing the narratives produced by Italian American families at dinnertime, I showed how the narrator creates a shared experiential ground among the participants, capturing the audience inside a narrative frame, involving them in the co-construction of a common past. I also examined how the participants in the conversation shift between several identities that can be considered part of an Italian-American repertoire. The results of this research were publicized through articles and conferences papers. Among them "Narrative Constructions of Italian American Ethnic Identities in Los Angeles," submitted for review to *Narrative Inquiry*.

In the present research I propose to understand racial identities as they are created in social interaction, by focusing my analysis on language use in everyday encounters. In preparation for it, I conducted two pilot research projects in Tuscany, the first in summer 2002 (thanks to a Powers Travel Grant from Oberlin College) and the second in Summer 2005 (thanks to a Grant-in-Aid for Research from Oberlin College). During these pilot studies, I became aware of the interplay of narratives that are deployed today in Tuscany to create racialized images of the self and the other. For example, I noticed that certain short narratives about supposed Albanian immigrants' criminal activities were used to initiate conversation among Tuscans who knew each other very little, as a way to start a conversation, just as in the United States people may comment about the weather. In these cases I noticed that the stories were always the same, always supposed to be true and to have happened to a friend of the person speaking, and that they led to a construction of agreement between interlocutors. The stories were usually racist or had racial undertones. During the second period of summer research I made contacts with Tuscan institutions interested in assisting the research project, conducted several colloquia with some of their members, and set up contacts to return for a longer period of fieldwork. In addition, I secured the support of the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia. The results of such pilot studies are leading my present research proposal and my methodological choices.

V. Methodology: *Location*

I chose to conduct my research in Italy for two main reasons. The first is that this is a country were immigration has started relatively recently. Until the beginning of the seventies Italy was a country still exporting, rather than importing, immigrants. In fact, until the beginning of the 80s, Italy supported an "open door" policy that allowed easy entry to immigrants. However, as a consequence of Italy's entrance on the Schlengen agreement, Italy has been progressively closing its boundaries. A second reason for my interest in Italy is that here immigrants are arriving in a country where regional identities have traditionally been strongly felt, more than a national one. I want to examine if the arrival of the immigrants is leading Italians to see themselves as a group, sharing similarities that can be seen as contrasting against the "immigrants' differences." The recent change also means that attitudes toward the immigrants in Italy are still in a state of flux; they have not had the time to solidify into strong categorization: thus an analysis of the construction of racialized images of immigrants in Italy could hope to actually see them in the moment of their formation.

My research will focus on the provinces of Pistoia, Prato and Florence, in the Northeast of Tuscany. Due to its position Tuscany is a transitional region, where Southern and Northern cultural elements meet. This is evident both in the language (Giacomelli, 1984/85) and in its genres of verbal art, like songs (Leydi, Mantovani & Pederiva, 1973) and folktales (Lapucci, 1984). Tuscany is an economically prosperous, highly industrialized region. Politically, it has been governed since World War II by the parties of the Left (Rotelli, 1980). Economically, the region has seen major changes in the post-war period, with the number of people employed in agrarian production steadily diminishing and a growing urbanization (Pratt, 1994; Revelli, 1977). In the past thirty years, industrial areas in Pistoia, Prato and Florence expanded toward each other. Today, a metropolitan string connects these

three cities and includes smaller cities such as Sesto Fiorentino, Calenzano and Agliana. The development of the industries has recalled a large number of immigrants.

The choice of this location is due to several reasons. First, while immigrants constitute 5% of the total Tuscan population, 50% of them live in the metropolitan area of Pistoia/Prato/Florence. Here they reach 8-12% of the total population. Of these 19% are Chinese, 16% Albanians, 7% Moroccans, 6% Filipino, and 52% belong to other nations. The three provinces also show interesting differences. A large percent of the Chinese immigrants are concentrated in Prato, where they constitute 45.6% of all immigrants (the largest Chinese community in Italy). It is against this group that much racist discourses are produced in the Prato area. In Pistoia, instead, 33.9% of the immigrants come from Albania. In the Florence province, Chinese immigrants constitute 14.9% of the total, followed by Albanians (12.7%) and Filipinos (8.1% - data made available by the *Centro Anti-Discriminazione of the Pistoia Province*). The high concentration of immigrants has quickly transformed the three provinces in a high contact area. Here, the "immigrant" argument has become a prominent focus of discussion both in the local media and by native Tuscans. In addition, the high presence of Chinese and Albanian immigrants renders these two groups highly visible and contributes to the sense that native Tuscans have of having been recently "invaded." A second reason for choosing this location is that this is a traditionally liberal area governed by the Left. The Italian Left has been on the forefront of attempts to protect immigrants' rights, legalize their status and at the same time promote tolerance. However, a recent study by Però (2001) conducted in Bologna, in Northern Italy, a city traditionally governed by the Left, has shown that the inclusionary rhetoric of the Left and its multiculturalism approach has not been able to avoid paternalistic and exclusionary practices (2001:183). Thus it becomes particularly interesting to see how racist attitudes toward immigrants emerge despite the officially upheld view of international solidarity between the working class and any oppressed group. Finally, I am a native Tuscan Italian and my past research there has allowed me to identify the situations in which discourses around identity and race emerge, and the contexts in which they are proposed, and to create a network of people whom I know and can count on for help in carrying out the study.

VI. Methodology: *Data Gathering*

This is a qualitative study deploying a series of methodologies available to anthropologists, including ethnographic fieldwork, interviews, videorecording, and participant observation.

Videorecording of natural interactions: To understand how racial identities and agreement on them are constructed in communication, and how eventual disagreement is performed, actual everyday interactions among Tuscans will be studied (Cameron, 2001; Duranti, 1997). In addition, I will be able to gather narratives regarding immigrants, a very common topic of discussion. I hope to show that through these narratives an image of the immigrant as "racial other" is created among the native population. Thus a large part of the data gathering effort will consist of the video and audio recording of conversations, with particular interest in the exchange of narratives (Ochs, 1979; 1997; Goodwin, 1990; Jefferson, 1978). I will focus on small groups of people who get together in specific occasions and contexts, such as families, groups of friends or acquaintances, recording their interactions in contexts where the group meets. These may be lunch or dinner time, evenings spent together or events in which the group participates. I have used this method successfully in my past research with Italian Americans. In addition, I will videorecord in hairdresser and barber's shops, and at public dinners organized as part of political and folk festivals.

I will videorecord a theoretical sample (Titscher, Meyer et al., 2000:41) of 15 groups in at least 50 occasions. When possible, such as in the case of families and groups of friends, a will record a group more than once. Since the groups may vary in size, I cannot say how many single persons will be included in this phase of the research. While I will have no possibility to predict in advance who may be present at each occasion, I will stratify the sample by recording an equal number of

occasions in the three provincial areas, an equal number in the hairdressing salons (where the clientele will be mainly female) and barber's shops (where the clientele will be mainly male). After videorecording I will note the number of participants, their age and sex, and the relationships among them (such as spouses, children, other relatives, friends, co-workers, etc.). After finishing all videorecordings of a group, I will successively contact the participants again to ask them information about their political leaning, educational and income levels (see below for further detail). This will allow me to stratify the sample a posteriori and increase its comparability to the sample to be interviewed, discussed below. The control of these demographic variables may be indicative of some of the context where they may have encountered immigrants or learned the stories about them. In addition, I will videorecord, separately, 10 community meetings and debates (common especially during the festivals organized by the political parties) whenever the argument of the meeting will be connected to immigration and immigrants. Getting permission to videorecord these public meetings is generally easy especially with the support of the Provinces. After videorecording I will note the number of participants, their sex and approximate age.

While there is no guarantee that relevant topics will be discussed in a given videorecorded occasion, my previous pilot study indicated that narratives regarding immigrants are exchanged quite frequently in the settings I have selected. I have a high level of confidence that the exchanges of interest will occur frequently. However, the recordings will be reviewed immediately after recording and, in case of absence of relevant topics, another occasion will be taped. Notwithstanding the difficulties of gathering data on spontaneous conversations, the fact remains that interaction cannot be satisfactorily studied in any other way.

Unstructured interviews: To understand how the self and other are constituted through stories narrated about Immigrant vs. Tuscan behavior and characteristics, a corpus of narratives will be gathered through interviews. Interviews are an ideal method to uncover and record people's belief systems, stances, opinions and attitudes (van Dijk, 1987:18; Briggs, 1986). Particular narratives and stories which center around racialized identities are performed again and again. I will conduct 100 open, semi-structured interviews. Such interviews will be carried out in concurrence with the videorecording, on a separate stratified theoretical sample of the population. The sample will be stratified for age, sex and area of residence. These are information that can be obtained from the live records archives of the provinces. The interviewees will be divided in three age groups: up to 25 years old, 25-60, older than 60. I believe that the understanding of "European," "Italian," "Tuscan" and "immigrant" identities in these three groups differ due to the different historical contexts in which they grew up. People older than 60 were born before the 2nd World War and under many respects had a very different upbringing that the people younger than 60. For example, many of them had to be immigrants at some point in life. This group is retired today. People between 25 and 60, grew up after the war, in a period of democratization, booming economy and industrialization that saw the abandonment of the countryside and of traditional forms of life and culture. People under 25, born after 1980, grew up when the waves of immigration to Italy had started, Europe was being created, and the separatist movements in Italy were emerging and gaining ground. I will select an equal number of men and women. Finally, I will stratify the sample by area of residence to see if there are differences in the stories narrated as a consequence of the informants living in cosmopolitan Florence, in industrial areas like those around Prato, in smaller provincial towns such as Pistoia, or in the nearby countryside. Such a stratified sample will allow me to avoid the mistake of approaching Tuscans as a homogenous entity and to track the way different images of the immigrants may be held, accepted or refused in different social groups.

After contacting each interviewee and obtaining permission to interview, I will ask him or her to invite one or more friends or relatives to join in the interview session. In this way, there will be an occasion for dialogue and exchange of opinions during the interview (van Dijk used this method

to gather part of his data, 1987). At the end of the interview, I will ask the respondents to answer three questions that will allow me to further stratify the sample (furnishing information not available a priori). First, I will ask them to define themselves politically as "right" "center/right" "center" "center/left" or "left." Second, I will ask the importance of religion in their life. Third, I will ask their educational level, their occupation and their family income. These last questions will be used to divide the sample on the basis of social class. In addition, I will register the age, sex and area of residence of the friends or family that may have joined in the interview. I will record the relationships among the people present (such as spouses, children, other relatives, friends, co-workers, etc.). This information will allow me, during the analysis of the data, to notice eventual differences in the way immigrants are depicted among different groups in the Tuscan population.

Reactivity and Questions asked during interviews: While the effect of the researcher's presence on the data can never be completely eliminated in social science's research, I will take steps to reduce such influence. In videotaping naturally occurring conversations, my interest will be mainly on "how" conversationalists interact, not just in the topic of interaction. In this sense reactivity will be minimal since people generally use conversational strategies unconsciously. Therefore, they are not able to modify them for the camera, except for brief periods (generally at the beginning of the recording). Researchers usually discard the first few minutes to a half an hour of a conversation, since this is the period when people may be "acting for the camera." I will discard all parts of the data in which an attention to the videocamera presence is obvious. To further reduce this effect I will, whenever possible, leave the setting. People tend to forget the presence of a videocamera, especially one on an unmanned tripod. The sex of the researcher may become relevant in relatively sex-segregated contexts, such as barbershops and hairdresser shops. To minimize such bias, in this case, a male research assistant will be sent to record in the male-dominated contexts.

Both in the videorecording of natural conversations and in the interviews, the knowledge of the research topic may influence the conversations that people would have. However, ethical considerations prohibit withholding an explanation of our purpose. To avoid both problems, I will furnish a very general account of the research questions in the consent forms, without discussing my specific interest in immigration and racism. I will explain that I am studying Tuscan society today and the meaning of being Tuscan. More extensive descriptions of the research will be given after the recording. The informants will have the right to ask for the destruction of the recordings at any time.

Special care must be exercised during the interviews, since the questions in an interview can lead the informant to say what the researcher wants to hear. Much research has been devoted to this kind of "Pygmalion effect" (Duranti, 1997). Adding to this, informants may be reticent to discuss topics that may make them appear as "racist," and give answers that are "socially desirable." At the same time, in this setting questions will be necessary to solicit relevant narratives around immigrants. To reduce reactivity to a minimum, I will make use of indirect questions. I will start from a very general one, such as: "What would you say have been the most important changes in Italian/Tuscan life over the past decade, or two decades?" If needed, I will ask additional questions liable to lead to discussing the immigrant presence. These will include questions that would address the general concern that the presence of immigrants is a problem due to their habits, their competition for jobs or supposed criminal activities, such as: "Do you feel life is easier/more difficult now than it was in the seventies? Would you say the quality of life has increased or decreased? Do you feel safer at home or in the street? Why and why not? Is it easier to find a job (or housing) today or more difficult? Why?" Another set of questions may elicit narratives regarding the "solution to the immigrant problem" and the expectations people have from the institutions, such as: "What do you perceive are the challenges that Tuscan and Italian institutions will face over the next 5/10 years? Which things would you like to see changed? What laws should be enacted (or repealed)?" A third set of questions should elicit narratives regarding perceived cultural changes as a consequence of immigration: "What does it

mean to you to be Tuscan today (or Pratese, Fiorentino, Pistoiese)? How was it is the past? How has Tuscan culture changed?" A few questions should explore the ways informants see the mass media, such as: "What do you think of the mass-media today? TV programs? What would you like them to spend more time on?" The answers should give an indication of how much the informants refer to the media in forming their stories about immigrants. When stories are told, I will ask additional questions about each of them to ascertain their origins, such as: "Where did you hear this story? Did it happen to you? Did you see it on TV? Has this happened to people you know?" Finally, I will volunteer similar stories from other interviews or from my fieldwork, to see if the respondent knows about them, always avoiding expressing personal judgment as to the credibility of the stories themselves.

Participant observation and recording fieldnotes: Interviews and videorecorded encounters have the disadvantage of being elicited or preordained events in which relevant narratives may not be present or may possibly be altered by the presence of the researcher and/or videocamera (Duranti, 1994, 1997; Tedlock, 1983). Therefore, participant observation with fieldnotes (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995) will be used to record spontaneous occurrences of identity performance, especially exchanges and narratives invoking discourses regarding self and others, race, immigration and immigrant behaviors. Since these narratives are unsolicited and can be produced at any time, on many occasions I will not have the possibility to videorecord them. Field note taking will be fundamental to the success of the study. I will start participant observation from the moment I arrive in Tuscany, recording relevant interpersonal encounters. At least two hours everyday will be dedicated to the writing of detailed ethnographic fieldnotes. Use of participant observation and fieldnotes will have the additional advantage of allowing for the possibility to cover a much larger range of contexts and will allow me to get a much better sense of the diffusion and characteristics of the narratives themselves. As part of ethnographic fieldwork, mass media presentation of discourses on immigrants' presence, identity and race will also be noted, as well as the actions of Italian public institutions and NGOs in regard to immigration.

VII. Methodology: *Data Analysis*

The analysis will start immediately and will proceed together with the gathering of data, so that in each phase I will be able to deploy the knowledge and experience accumulated in the preceding phases. In regard to the videorecorded everyday interactions, it is important to start transcribing as soon as possible, when the informants are available to help create an "annotated transcription" (Schieffelin, 1979, 1990). I will first review the corpus of recorded data to find all speech events in which relevant topics -- such as immigration, immigrant behavior, reaction to immigration, etc. – are present. I will then use a Conversation Analysis approach to analyze these speech events, creating a transcript with the classic notation found in Atkinson and Heritage (1984). For the analysis of narratives, I will also use a modified form of Tedlock's transcription notation (Tedlock, 1983; also Wiget 1987), which I have already used in my previous research with Italian Americans, and Wiget's model to analyze narratives. I will dedicate particular attention to construction of agreement and consensus, through co-narration of stories, feedback of participants to speaker, and conversational synchrony, as well as proxemics, eye-gaze and gestures. A Grounded Theory approach will be used in the analysis of the interviews. A detailed analysis of the content of the interviews, looking at meaning, will be the most helpful approach to uncover underlying stances. This dataset will be organized into binders and coded inductively. I will also apply a discourse analysis approach and pay particular attention not only to the stories told during the interviews, but also to the ways in which the tellers manage the interaction during the telling, in particular how they preserve face when building discourses that can be racist and thus potentially censorable by the listeners. Since the material to be transcribed will accumulate quickly, I intend to hire three assistants to help me with the task. The first two assistants will be hired in Italy and will help with each phase of data gathering as well as with transcription. One of them would be trained in Conversation

Analysis. Professor Gabriele Pallotti of the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia has offered to put me in contact with some of his graduate and post-graduate students who would be interested in working on this research project. These would be already trained in Conversation Analysis transcription methods. The second assistant will be hired with the help of the ASEL research center in Prato and the University of Florence, and will be trained in the analysis of interview data. The third assistant will be hired in the United States in the second and fourth phases of the research, to help finish transcription and data analysis.

VIII. Time Frame.

The research will be carried out over a period of three years, including 18 months spent doing fieldwork in Italy, and will be divided in the following phases:

1) May 15, 2006 to August 15, 2007 (15 months): The first month I will be setting up for the research and re-establishing contacts with local institutions, local centers that help and care for immigrants, educational institutions, etc. I will hire the Italian research assistants. During the second month I will construct a sample of the population and start contacting the informants, obtaining permission to videorecord and interview. In the following 13 months the bulk of the research will be carried out. I will videorecord actual conversations, make a first analysis, and conduct interviews with informants. Data analysis will proceed at the same pace as the data gathering.

2) September 2007 to May 2008: During this period, back at my home institution in the United States, I will complete the analysis of the data with the help of a student research assistant. Preliminary results of my research should be ready for publication by Spring 2008. This pause in data gathering activities will allow me to recalibrate my insights and my data gathering methods.

3) End of May to end of August 2008 (3 months): I will return to Tuscany to conduct follow-up interviews or videotaping according to the needs perceived at that point and to address new questions that might have emerged. I will start bringing back to the Italian institutions working with immigrants the results of my research, to translate and disseminate them.

3) September 2008 to May 2009: Back in the US, I will complete data analysis with the help of a research assistant. I will then proceed to write up the results into academic articles and a book.